

PROSE OF

WILLIAM CUDDELL BRYANT

EDITED BY

FERRE GODWIN



*Edwin W. Coggeshall.*

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THE  
L I F E   A N D   W O R K S  
OF  
WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

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VOL. V.



PROSE WRITINGS  
OF  
WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

EDITED BY  
PARKE GODWIN.

Volume First.  
*ESSAYS, TALES, AND ORATIONS.*

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## P R E F A C E.

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WHEN this final edition of "The Life and Works" of Mr. Bryant was projected, the editor announced, in order to meet the suggestions of many friends of the poet, that it would comprise his "Orations and Addresses," and his various letters of travel. But, on a more careful consideration of those works, it was found that, while a considerable part of them had become obsolete through lapse of time, a reproduction of them in full would extend the enterprise beyond all desirable limits. He therefore resolved to confine the prose writings to a few specimens from the several departments of essays, travels, narratives, and editorial criticisms and comments, in which Mr. Bryant's intellectual activities had been displayed. By this change of plan, he is aware that the collection is likely to assume the character of a mere miscellany; but he hopes, on the other hand, that it will possess the advantage of exhibiting, in a clearer light, the extent, vivacity, and versatility of the author's powers, the range and current of his studies, and his opinions at different times, as well as the

relation of his efforts to the various historical developments of our politics and literature.

As this publication is intended to be mainly a memorial and record of the life of one of the earliest and most eminent of our men of letters, the editor trusts that it will be found interesting not only by students but by the general public.

It is proper to add that the legal representatives of Mr. Bryant have no control over his translations of Homer, but they hope to make arrangements with Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., the publishers of those works, by which any persons who desire them may be able to procure them in uniform shape with the present volumes.

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I.

LITERARY ESSAYS.





# LECTURES ON POETRY.\*

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## LECTURE FIRST.

### ON THE NATURE OF POETRY.

IN treating of the subject which has been assigned me, it is obvious that it will be impossible for me to compress into four lectures anything like a complete view of it. I am to speak of one of the most ancient of all arts, of the very earliest and most venerable branch of literature—one which even now exists in many countries that have no other; one, which although it has not in every period been cultivated with the same degree of success, has yet in no age of the world ceased to attract a large degree of the attention of mankind. Not only have the writers of poetry been exceedingly numerous—more so, perhaps, than those of any other class—but poetry has shot forth another branch of literature, her handmaid and satellite, and raised up a large body of authors, who speculate upon what the poets have written, who define the elements and investigate the principles of the art, and fix the degrees of esti-

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\* In April, 1825, shortly after taking up his residence in New York, Mr. Bryant was invited to read a course of four lectures on poetry before the New York Athenæum, which has since become the Society Library, and he complied with the request. Among his papers these lectures were found, and though apparently no more than sketches or suggestions, which he doubtless filled up in his oral delivery of them, they are yet full and consecutive enough to furnish us valuable information as to his views of the elementary principles of his art.—ED.

mation in which its several productions should be held. Not only has the poetry of one age been exceedingly different from that of another, but different styles of poetry have prevailed at the same time in different nations, different schools of poetry have arisen in the same nation, and different forms of poetical composition have been preferred by the several writers of the same school. So much poetry has been written, and that poetry has been the subject of so much criticism, so much matter for speculation has been collected, and so many reasonings and theories have been framed out of it, that the subject has grown to be one of the most comprehensive in the whole province of literature.

If I were to treat of either of its great subdivisions—if, for example, I were to attempt its history from its earliest origin, through its various stages, to the present time; if I were to analyze the several forms of poetical composition, or to point out the characteristics of the various kinds of poetry that have prevailed at different periods, or to compare the genius of the most illustrious poets—in either case, I could do little more than pass rapidly over the principal topics. The view would be so brief that it would seem like a dry table of the contents of a large work, and would become tedious from its very brevity. I shall, therefore, in the short course of lectures which I have undertaken, attempt no entire view of the subject assigned to me; but shall only endeavor to select a few of the topics which seem to me among the most interesting, and on which I may imagine that I shall weary you the least.

Of the nature of poetry different ideas have been entertained. The ancient critics seemed to suppose that they did something toward giving a tolerable notion of it by calling it a mimetic or imitative art, and classing it with sculpture and painting. Of its affinity with these arts there can be no doubt; but that affinity seems to me to consist almost wholly in the principles by which they all produce their effect, and not in the manner in which those principles are reduced to practice.

There is no propriety in applying to poetry the term *imitative* in a literal and philosophical sense, as there is in applying it to painting and sculpture. The latter speak to the senses; poetry speaks directly to the mind. They reproduce sensible objects, and, by means of these, suggest the feeling or sentiment connected with them; poetry, by the symbols of words, suggests both the sensible object and the association. I should be glad to learn how a poem descriptive of a scene or an event is any more an imitation of that scene or that event than a prose description would be. A prose composition giving an account of the proportions and dimensions of a building, and the materials of which it is constructed, is certainly, so far as mere exactness is concerned, a better imitation of it than the finest poem that could be written about it. Yet who, after all, ever thought of giving such a composition the name of an imitation? The truth is, painting and sculpture are, literally, imitative arts, while poetry is only metaphorically so. The epithet as applied to poetry may be well enough, perhaps, as a figure of speech, but to make a metaphor the foundation of a philosophical classification is putting it to a service in which it is sure to confuse what it professes to make clear.

I would rather call poetry a suggestive art. Its power of affecting the mind by pure suggestion, and employing, instead of a visible or tangible imitation, arbitrary symbols, as unlike as possible to the things with which it deals, is what distinguishes this from its two sister arts. It is owing to its operation by means of suggestion that it affects different minds with such different degrees of force. In a picture or a statue the colors and forms employed by the artist impress the senses with the greatest distinctness. In painting, there is little—in sculpture, there is less—for the imagination to supply. It is true that different minds, according to their several degrees of cultivation, will receive different degrees of pleasure from the productions of these arts, and that the moral associations they suggest will be variously felt, and in some instances variously interpreted. Still, the impression made on the senses is

in all cases the same; the same figures, the same lights and shades, are seen by all beholders alike. But the creations of Poetry have in themselves nothing of this precision and fixedness of form, and depend greatly for their vividness and clearness of impression upon the mind to which they are presented. Language, the great machine with which her miracles are wrought, is contrived to have an application to all possible things; and wonderful as this contrivance is, and numerous and varied as are its combinations, it is still limited and imperfect, and, in point of comprehensiveness, distinctness, and variety, falls infinitely short of the mighty and diversified world of matter and mind of which it professes to be the representative. It is, however, to the very limitation of this power of language, as it seems to me, that Poetry owes her magic. The most detailed of her descriptions, which, by the way, are not always the most striking, are composed of a few touches; they are glimpses of things thrown into the mind; here and there a trace of the outline; here a gleam of light, and there a dash of shade. But these very touches act like a spell upon the imagination and awaken it to greater activity, and fill it, perhaps, with greater delight than the best defined objects could do. The imagination is the most active and the least susceptible of fatigue of all the faculties of the human mind; its more intense exercise is tremendous, and sometimes unsettles the reason; its repose is only a gentle sort of activity; nor am I certain that it is ever quite unemployed, for even in our sleep it is still awake and busy, and amuses itself with fabricating our dreams. To this restless faculty—which is unsatisfied when the whole of its work is done to its hands, and which is ever wandering from the combination of ideas directly presented to it to other combinations of its own—it is the office of poetry to furnish the exercise in which it delights. Poetry is that art which selects and arranges the symbols of thought in such a manner as to excite it the most powerfully and delightfully. The imagination of the reader is guided, it is true, by the poet, and it is his business to guide it skilfully and



agreeably ; but the imagination in the mean time is by no means passive. It pursues the path which the poet only points out, and shapes its visions from the scenes and allusions which he gives. It fills up his sketches of beauty with what suits its own highest conceptions of the beautiful, and completes his outline of grandeur with the noblest images its own stores can furnish. It is obvious that the degree of perfection with which this is done must depend greatly upon the strength and cultivation of that faculty. For example, in the following passage, in which Milton describes the general mother passing to her daily task among the flowers :

“ With goddess-like demeanor forth she went  
Not unattended, for on her as queen  
A pomp of winning graces waited still.”

The coldest imagination, on reading it, will figure to itself, in the person of Eve, the finest forms, attitudes, and movements of female loveliness and dignity, which, after all, are not described, but only hinted at by the poet. A warmer fancy, kindling at the delicate allusions in these lines, will not only bestow these attractions on the principal figure, but will fill the air around her with beauty, and people it with the airy forms of the graces ; it will see the delicate proportions of their limbs, the lustre of their flowing hair, and the soft light of their eyes. Take, also, the following passage from the same poet, in which, speaking of Satan, he says :

“ His face  
Deep scars of thunder had entrenched, and care  
Sat on his faded cheek—but under brows  
Of dauntless courage and considerate pride  
Waiting revenge ; cruel his eye but cast  
Signs of remorse and passion to behold  
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather,  
(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned  
For evermore to have their lot in pain.”

The imagination of the reader is stimulated by the hints in this powerful passage to form to itself an idea of the features

in which reside this strong expression of malignity and dejection—the brow, the cheek, the eye of the fallen angel, bespeaking courage, pride, the settled purpose of revenge, anxiety, sorrow for the fate of his followers, and fearfully marked with the wrath of the Almighty. There can be no doubt that the picture which this passage calls up in the minds of different individuals will vary accordingly as the imagination is more or less vivid, or more or less excited in the perusal. It will vary, also, accordingly as the individual is more or less experienced in the visible expression of strong passion, and as he is in the habit of associating the idea of certain emotions with certain configurations of the countenance.

There is no question that one principal office of poetry is to excite the imagination, but this is not its sole, nor perhaps its chief, province; another of its ends is to touch the heart, and, as I expect to show in this lecture, it has something to do with the understanding. I know that some critics have made poetry to consist solely in the exercise of the imagination. They distinguish poetry from pathos. They talk of pure poetry, and by this phrase they mean passages of mere imagery, with the least possible infusion of human emotion. I do not know by what authority these gentlemen take the term poetry from the people, and thus limit its meaning.

In its ordinary acceptation, it has, in all ages and all countries, included something more. When we speak of a poem, we do not mean merely a tissue of striking images. The most beautiful poetry is that which takes the strongest hold of the feelings, and, if it is really the most beautiful, then it is poetry in the highest sense. Poetry is constantly resorting to the language of the passions to heighten the effect of her pictures; and, if this be not enough to entitle that language to the appellation of poetical, I am not aware of the meaning of the term. Is there no poetry in the wrath of Achilles? Is there no poetry in the passage where Lear, in the tent of Cordelia, just recovered from his frenzy, his senses yet infirm and unassured, addresses his daughter as she kneels to ask his blessing?



“ Pray do not mock me ;  
I am a very foolish, fond old man,  
Fourscore and upward :  
Not an hour more or less, and to deal plainly  
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.”

Is there no poetry in the remorse of Othello, in the terrible consciousness of guilt which haunts Macbeth, or the lamentations of Antony over the body of his friend, the devoted love of Juliet, and the self-sacrificing affection of Cleopatra? In the immortal work of Milton, is there no poetry in the penitence of Adam, or in the sorrows of Eve at being excluded from Paradise? The truth is, that poetry which does not find its way to the heart is scarcely deserving of the name ; it may be brilliant and ingenious, but it soon wearies the attention. The feelings and the imagination, when skilfully touched, act reciprocally on each other. For example, when the poet introduces Ophelia, young, beautiful, and unfortunate, the wildness of frenzy in her eye, dressed with fantastic garlands of wild flowers, and singing snatches of old tunes, there is a picture for the imagination, but it is one which affects the heart. But when, in the midst of her incoherent talk, she utters some simple allusion to her own sorrows, as when she says,

“ We know what we are, but know not what we may be,”

this touching sentence, addressed merely to our sympathy, strongly excites the imagination. It sets before us the days when she knew sorrow only by name, before her father was slain by the hand of her lover, and before her lover was estranged, and makes us feel the heaviness of that affliction which crushed a being so gentle and innocent and happy.

Those poems, however, as I have already hinted, which are apparently the most affluent of imagery, are not always those which most kindle the reader's imagination. It is because the ornaments with which they abound are not naturally suggested by the subject, not poured forth from a mind

warmed and occupied by it; but a forced fruit of the fancy, produced by labor, without spontaneity or excitement.

The language of passion is naturally figurative, but its figures are only employed to heighten the intensity of the expression; they are never introduced for their own sake. Important, therefore, as may be the office of the imagination in poetry, the great spring of poetry is emotion. It is this power that holds the key of the storehouse where the mind has laid up its images, and that alone can open it without violence. All the forms of fancy stand ever in its sight, ready to execute its bidding. Indeed, I doubt not that most of the offences against good taste in this kind of composition are to be traced to the absence of emotion. A desire to treat agreeably or impressively a subject by which the writer is himself little moved, leads him into great mistakes about the means of effecting his purpose. This is the origin of cold conceits, of prosing reflections, of the minute painting of uninteresting circumstances, and of the opposite extremes of tameness and extravagance. On the other hand, strong feeling is always a sure guide. It rarely offends against good taste, because it instinctively chooses the most effectual means of communicating itself to others. It gives a variety to the composition it inspires, with which the severest taste is delighted. It may sometimes transgress arbitrary rules, or offend against local associations, but it speaks a language which reaches the heart in all countries and all times. Everywhere are the sentiments of fortitude and magnanimity uttered in strains that brace our own nerves, and the dead mourned in accents that draw our tears.

But poetry not only addresses the passions and the imagination; it appeals to the understanding also. So far as this position relates to the principles of taste which lie at the foundation of all poetry, and by which its merits are tried, I believe its truth will not be doubted. These principles have their origin in the reason of things, and are investigated and applied by the judgment. True it is that they may be observed by

one who has never speculated about them, but it is no less true that their observance always gratifies the understanding with the fitness, the symmetry, and the congruity it produces. To write fine poetry requires intellectual faculties of the highest order, and among these, not the least important, is the faculty of reason. Poetry is the worst mask in the world behind which folly and stupidity could attempt to hide their features. Fitter, safer, and more congenial to them is the solemn discussion of unprofitable questions. Any obtuseness of apprehension or incapacity for drawing conclusions, which shows a deficiency or want of cultivation of the reasoning power, is sure to expose the unfortunate poet to contempt and ridicule.

But there is another point of view in which poetry may be said to address the understanding—I mean in the direct lessons of wisdom that it delivers. Remember that it does not concern itself with abstract reasonings, nor with any course of investigation that fatigues the mind. Nor is it merely didactic; but this does not prevent it from teaching truths which the mind instinctively acknowledges. The elements of moral truth are few and simple, but their combinations with human actions are as innumerable and diversified as the combinations of language. Thousands of inductions resulting from the application of great principles to human life and conduct lie, as it were, latent in our minds, which we have never drawn for ourselves, but which we admit the moment they are hinted at, and which, though not abstruse, are yet new. Nor are these of less value because they require no laborious research to discover them. The best riches of the earth are produced on its surface, and we need no reasoning to teach us the folly of a people who should leave its harvests ungathered to dig for its ores. The truths of which I have spoken, when possessing any peculiar force or beauty, are properly within the province of the art of which I am treating, and, when recommended by harmony of numbers, become poetry of the highest kind. Accordingly, they abound in the works of the most celebrated poets. When Shakespeare says of mercy,

“it is twice blessed—

It blesses him that gives and him that takes,”

does he not utter beautiful poetry as well as unquestionable truth? There are passages also in Milton of the same kind, which sink into the heart like the words of an oracle. For instance :

“ Evil into the mind of God or man  
May come and go so unapproved, and leave  
No spot or blame behind.”

Take, also, the following example from Cowper, in which he bears witness against the guilt and folly of princes :

“ War is a game which, were their subjects wise,  
Kings should not play at. Nations would do well  
To extort their truncheons from the puny hands  
Of heroes whose infirm and baby minds  
Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil,  
Because men suffer it, their toy—the world.”

I call these passages poetry, because the mind instantly acknowledges their truth and feels their force, and is moved and filled and elevated by them. Nor does poetry refuse to carry on a sort of process of reasoning by deducing one truth from another. Her demonstrations differ, however, from ordinary ones by requiring that each step should be in itself beautiful or striking, and that they all should carry the mind to the final conclusion without the consciousness of labor.

All the ways by which poetry affects the mind are open also to the prose-writer. All that kindles the imagination, all that excites emotion, all those moral truths that find an echo in our bosoms, are his property as well as that of the poet. It is true that in the ornaments of style the poet is allowed a greater license, but there are many excellent poems which are not distinguished by any liberal use of the figures of speech from prose writings composed with the same degree of excitement. What, then, is the ground of the distinction between prose and poetry? This is a question about which



there has been much debate, but one which seems to me of easy solution to those who are not too ambitious of distinguishing themselves by profound researches into things already sufficiently clear. I suppose that poetry differs from prose, in the first place, by the employment of metrical harmony. It differs from it, in the next place, by excluding all that disgusts, all that tasks and fatigues the understanding, and all matters which are too trivial and common to excite any emotion whatever. Some of these, verse cannot raise into dignity ; to others, verse is an encumbrance : they are, therefore, all unfit for poetry ; put them into verse, and they are prose still.

A distinction has been attempted to be made between poetry and eloquence, and I acknowledge that there is one ; but it seems to me that it consists solely in metrical arrangement. Eloquence is the poetry of prose ; poetry is the eloquence of verse. The maxim that the poet is born and the orator made is a pretty antithesis, but a moment's reflection will convince us that one can become neither without natural gifts improved by cultivation. By eloquence I do not mean mere persuasiveness : there are many processes of argument that are not susceptible of eloquence, because they require close and painful attention. But by eloquence I understand those appeals to our moral perceptions that produce emotion as soon as they are uttered. It is in these that the orator is himself affected with the feelings he would communicate, that his eyes glisten, and his frame seems to dilate, and his voice acquires an unwonted melody, and his sentences arrange themselves into a sort of measure and harmony, and the listener is chained in involuntary and breathless attention. This is the very enthusiasm that is the parent of poetry. Let the same man go to his closet and clothe in numbers conceptions full of the same fire and spirit, and they will be poetry.

In conclusion, I will observe that the elements of poetry make a part of our natures, and that every individual is more or less a poet. In this "bank-note world," as it has been happily denominated, we sometimes meet with individuals who

declare that they have no taste for poetry. But by their leave I will assert they are mistaken; they have it, although they may have never cultivated it. Is there any one among them who will confess himself insensible to the beauty of order or to the pleasure of variety—two principles, the happy mingling of which makes the perfection of poetic numbers? Is there any one whose eye is undelighted with beautiful forms and colors, whose ear is not charmed by sweet sounds, and who sees no loveliness in the returns of light and darkness, and the changes of the seasons? Is there any one for whom the works of Nature have no associations but such as relate to his animal wants? Is there any one to whom her great courses and operations show no majesty, to whom they impart no knowledge, and from whom they hide no secrets? Is there any one who is attached by no ties to his fellow-beings, who has no hopes for the future, and no memory of the past? Have they all forgotten the days and the friends of their childhood, and do they all shut their eyes to the advances of age? Have they nothing to desire and nothing to lament, and are their minds never darkened with the shadows of fear? Is it, in short, for these men that life has no pleasures and no pains, the grave no solemnity, and the world to come no mysteries? All these things are the sources of poetry, and they are not only part of ourselves, but of the universe, and will expire only with the last of the creatures of God.

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## LECTURE SECOND.

### ON THE VALUE AND USES OF POETRY.

IN my last lecture I attempted to give some notion of the nature of poetry. In the present I intend to examine its value and uses, to inquire into its effects upon human welfare and happiness, and to consider some of the objections that have



been urged against an indulgence in its delights. It is of no little consequence that we should satisfy ourselves of the tendency of a class of compositions which forms so large a part of the literature of all nations and times, so that, if it is found beneficial, we may estimate the degree in which it is worthy of encouragement; if pernicious, that we may bethink ourselves of a remedy. In what I have to say on this head I cannot by any means be certain that my partiality for the art will permit me to treat the subject with that coolness of judgment and freedom from prejudice which might be desirable. I only ask your frank assent to whatever may be true in the apology I shall make for it. It is not for my hands to hold the balance in which it is weighed.

I shall consider the influence of poetry on the welfare and happiness of our race in the three points of view in which I placed it in my last lecture—namely, as it addresses itself to the imagination, to the passions, and to the intelligence. As it respects the imagination, I believe the question may be soon and easily disposed of; for, so far as that faculty merely is excited by poetry without taking into account the effect produced on the passions, its activity is an amusement, an agreeable intellectual exercise—no more. A great deal of poetry, doubtless, has no higher object than this, and excites no stronger emotion than that complacency which proceeds from being agreeably employed. This is something in a world whose inhabitants are perpetually complaining of its labors, fatigues, and miseries. It has, however, a still higher value when regarded as in some sort the support of our innocence, for there is ever something pure and elevated in the creations of poetry. Its spirit is an aspiration after superhuman beauty and majesty, which, if it has no affinity with, has at least some likeness to, virtue. We cannot eradicate the imagination, but we may cultivate and regulate it; we cannot keep it from continual action, but we can give it a salutary direction. Certainly it is a noble occupation to shape the creations of the mind into perfect forms according to those

laws which man learns from observing the works of his Maker.

There are exercises of the imagination, it must be confessed, of too gross and sordid a nature to be comprised within the confines of any divine art—revellings of the fancy amid the images of base appetites and petty and ridiculous passions. These are the hidden sins of the heart, that lurk in its darkest recesses, where shame and the opinion of men cannot come to drive them out, and which pollute and debase it the more because they work in secrecy and at leisure. Is it not well, therefore, to substitute something better in the place of these, or, at least, to preoccupy the mind with what may prevent their entrance, and to create imaginative habits that may lead us to regard them with contempt and disgust. Poetry is well fitted for this office. It has no community with degradation, nor with things that degrade. It utters nothing that cannot be spoken without shame. Into the window of his bosom who relishes its pleasures, all the world may freely look. The tastes from which it springs, the sentiments it awakens, the objects on which it dwells with fondness, and which it labors to communicate to mankind, are related to the best and most universal sympathies of our nature.

In speaking of the influences of poetry on the happiness of mankind as connected with its effects on the imagination, I have been obliged to anticipate a part of what I had to say in regard to its power over the passions. These two topics, indeed, are closely connected; they may be separated in classification, but it is difficult to speculate upon them separately; for, as I observed in my last lecture, the excitement of the imagination awakens the feelings, and the excitement of the feelings kindles the imagination. It is the dominion of poetry over the feelings and passions of men that gives it its most important bearing upon the virtue and the welfare of society. Everything that affects our sensibilities is a part of our moral education, and the habit of being rightly affected by all the circumstances by which we are surrounded is the perfection

of the moral character. The purest of all religions agrees with the soundest philosophy in referring the practice of virtue to the affections. Every good action has its correspondent emotion of the heart given to impel us to our duty, and to reward us for doing it. Now, it is admitted that poetry moves these springs of moral conduct powerfully; but it has sometimes been disputed whether it moves them in a salutary way, or whether it perverts them to evil. This question may be settled by inquiring what kind of sentiments it ordinarily tends to encourage. Has it any direct connection with vice? for, if it has not, the emotions it inspires must be innocent, and innocent emotions are emphatically healthful. Is there any poetry in cruelty? are the vivid descriptions of human and animal suffering it sets before us such as make us to rejoice in that suffering, or even such as leave us unmoved? Is there any poetry in injustice? Is there any poetry in fraud and treachery? The stronger the colors in which the former is painted, the more thoroughly do we detest it; the more forcibly the latter is presented to our minds, the more cordially do we despise it. Has poetry any kindred with covetousness and selfishness? or, rather, are they not a blight, and death itself, to that enthusiasm to which poetry owes its birth? On the other hand, do we not know that poetry delights in inspiring compassion, the parent of all kind offices? Does it not glory in sentiments of fortitude and magnanimity, the fountain of disinterested sacrifices? It cherishes patriotism, the incitement to vigorous toils endured for the welfare of communities. It luxuriates among the natural affections, the springs of all the gentle charities of domestic life. It has so refined and transformed and hallowed the love of the sexes that piety itself has sometimes taken the language of that passion to clothe its most fervent aspirations. It delights to infold not only the whole human race, but all the creatures of God, in the wide circle of its sympathies. It loves to point man to the beginning and end of his days, and to the short and swift passage between; to linger about the cradle and about the grave, and

to lift the veil of another life. All moral lessons which are uninteresting and unimpressive, and, therefore, worthless, it leaves to prose; but all those which touch the heart, and are, therefore, important and effectual, are its own. One passion, indeed, is excited by poetry, about the worth of which moralists differ—the love of glory. I cannot stay to inquire into the moral quality of this passion; but this I will say, that, if it be not a virtue, it is frequently an excellent substitute for one, and becomes the motive of great and generous actions. At all events, a regard for the good opinion of our fellow-creatures is so interwoven with our natures, is of so much value to the order and welfare of society, does so much good and prevents so much evil, that I cannot bring myself to think ill of anything that encourages and directs it. None the less, poetry teaches us, also, lessons of profoundest humility. Reverence for that boundless goodness and infinite power which pervade and uphold all things that exist is one of its elements, and is the source of some of its loftiest meditations and deepest emotions. Much as we all glory in the power that is our own, the mind delights quite as naturally to raise its view to power that is above it, and to lose itself in the contemplation of strength and wisdom without bound. The poet who wrote atheist after his name knew not of what manner of spirit he was. He, too, paid a willing and undissembled homage to the Divinity. He called it Nature, but it was the Great First Cause whom we all worship, whatever its essence, and whatever its name.

One of the great recommendations of poetry in that point of view in which I am now considering it is, that it withdraws us from the despotism of many of those circumstances which mislead the moral judgment. It is dangerous to be absorbed continuously in our own immediate concerns. Self-interest is the most ingenious and persuasive of all the agents that deceive our consciences, while by means of it our unhappy and stubborn prejudices operate in their greatest force. But poetry lifts us to a sphere where self-interest cannot exist, and



where the prejudices that perplex our every-day life can hardly enter. It restores us to our unperturbed feelings, and leaves us at liberty to compare the issues of life with our unsophisticated notions of good and evil. We are taught to look at them as they are in themselves, and not as they may affect our present convenience, and then we are sent back to the world with our moral perceptions cleared and invigorated.

Among the most remarkable of the influences of poetry is the exhibition of those analogies and correspondences which it beholds between the things of the moral and of the natural world. I refer to its adorning and illustrating each by the other—infusing a moral sentiment into natural objects, and bringing images of visible beauty and majesty to heighten the effect of moral sentiment. Thus it binds into one all the passages of human life and connects all the varieties of human feeling with the works of creation. Any one who will make the experiment for himself will see how exceedingly difficult it is to pervert this process into an excitement of the bad passions of the soul. There are a purity and innocence in the appearances of Nature that make them refuse to be allied to the suggestions of guilty emotion. We discern no sin in her grander operations and vicissitudes, and no lessons of immorality are to be learned from them, as there are from the examples of the world. They cannot be studied without inducing the love, if they fail of giving the habit, of virtue. In so far as poetry directly addresses the understanding, it would be preposterous to apprehend any injurious consequences from it, which in my last lecture I said was by means of those moral truths which the mind instinctively acknowledges, and of which it immediately feels the force. The simplicity and clearness of the truths with which it deals prevent any mistake in regard to their meanings or tendencies. They strike the mind by their own brightness, and win its assent by their manifest and beautiful agreement with the lessons of our own experience. It belongs to more subtle and abstruse speculations than any into which poetry can enter, to unsettle the notions of men re-

specting right and wrong. Ingenious casuistry and labored sophistry may confuse and puzzle the understanding, and lead it through their own darkness to false conclusions; but poetry abhors their assistance. It may be said, however, that the power which poetry exercises over the mind is liable to abuse. It is so, undoubtedly, like all power. Its influences may be, and unquestionably have been, perverted; but my aim has been to show that they are beneficial in their nature, intrinsically good, and, if so, not to be rejected because accidentally mischievous. To confound the abuses of a thing with the thing itself is to sophisticate. Why do not they who set up this objection to poetry talk in the same manner of the common and universal sources of human enjoyment? When you tell them of the element which diffuses comfort through our habitations, when the earth and the air are frozen, and enables us to support life through the inclemency of the season, do they deny its utility, or endeavor to convince you of your error, by pointing you to dwellings laid waste by conflagrations, or by telling you tales of martyrs roasted at the stake? When you speak of the beneficent influences of the sun, why do they not meet you with the scorched and barren deserts of Africa, with diseases born under his heat, the plague of Europe, and the yellow fever of America? When you are simple enough to rejoice in the kind provision of rains for the refreshment of the earth and the growth of its plants, why do they not silence you with stories of harvests and cattle and human beings swept away by inundations? Well, when we are persuaded to part with our hearth-fires, and to refuse the fruits which sunshine and showers have ripened for our sustenance, let us give up poetry. In the mean time, instead of putting it by with scorn, let us cherish it as we do the other gifts of Heaven.

In those works which have met with merited reprehension on account of their pernicious tendencies, it is not of the poetry that the friends of virtue have reason to complain; it is of the foul ingredients mingled with it; it is of the leaven of cor-

ruption interspersed with what is in itself pure and innocent. The elements of poetry are the beautiful and noble in the creation and in man's nature; and, so far as anything vicious is mingled with these, the compound is incongruous. Indeed, I am apt to think that those poems which are objectionable on account of their immoral character have won for their authors the reputation of greater powers than they really possessed. The passages of real beauty and excellence which they contain appear the more beautiful and excellent from the contrast they offer to the grossness by which they are surrounded. Those bursts of true feeling, those fine moral touches, those apprehensions of the glory and beauty of the universe, and the language it speaks to the heart of man, delight us there by a certain unexpectedness. Their innocence appears more spotless, their pathos more touching, because such qualities refresh the mind in the midst of its horror and disgust.

The heroic poems of the ancients are said to inspire a sanguinary spirit, the love of war, and an indifference to the miseries of which war is the cause; but I cannot believe that they produce this effect to the extent which many suppose, and, so far as they do produce it, it is from an imperfection in the poetry. Poetry that is unfeeling and indifferent to suffering is no poetry at all. It is but justice, however, to these writers to say that, if they do encourage a fondness for war, it is rather by what they leave undone than what they do. War, like all other situations of danger and of change, calls forth the exertion of admirable intellectual qualities and great virtues, and it is only by dwelling on these, and keeping out of sight the sufferings and sorrows, and all the crimes and evils that follow in its train, that it has its glory in the eyes of men. We do not admire the heroes of Homer because they shed blood and cut throats—any highwayman may do this—but we admire them for the greatness of mind they show in the dreadful scenes in which they are engaged. We reverence that hardy spirit that faces danger without shrinking, and voluntarily exposes the body to pain, for it is a modification of that

noble principle which gives birth to all virtue and all greatness—the endurance of present toils and submission to present sacrifices, in order to insure great good for the future. We love, also, to contemplate strong and skilful action of the body, which in the personal combats he describes is prompted and ordered by strong action of the mind, by intense emotion, and clear sagacity. But the purer and gentler spirit of the Father of Verse and the humanizing influences of poetry show themselves strongly in his great works, and set him far in advance of the age in which he wrote. The poet often stops to lament those whom his favorite heroes slew without remorse—old men cut off in the honors of a blameless age, young men in the bloom of their years and the promise of their virtues—and to sympathize with the unavailing and unappeasable sorrow of those to whom they were dear. Nay, it would seem that his mind was ever haunted with a secret sentiment of the emptiness of the very glory he was celebrating, for not only the *Odyssey*, but the *Iliad* itself, is full of allusions to the final fate of those who earned renown at the siege of Troy, to their wanderings, their hardships, their domestic calamities, and their violent and unhonored deaths.

I shall close this lecture with an extract from an eloquent writer, who has replied to some other objections that have been raised against poetry in such a manner that I should not feel myself justified in using any other words than his own: “It is objected to poetry,” he says, “that it gives wrong views and excites false expectations of life, peoples the mind with shadows and illusions, and builds up imaginations on ruins of wisdom. That there is a wisdom against which poetry wars—the wisdom of the senses, which makes physical comfort the chief good, and wealth the chief interest of life—is not denied; nor can it be denied, the least service which poetry renders to mankind, that it redeems them from the thralldom of this earth-born prudence. But, passing over this topic, it may be observed that the complaint against poetry as abounding in illusion and deception is in the main groundless. In many poems



there is more of truth than in many histories and philosophic theories. The fictions of genius are often the vehicles of the sublimest verities, and its flashes often open new regions of thought, and throw new light on the mysteries of our being. In poetry the letter is falsehood, but the spirit is often the profoundest wisdom. And, if truth thus dwells in the boldest fictions of the poet, much more may it be expected in his delineations of life; for the present life, which is the first stage of the immortal mind, abounds in the materials of poetry, and it is the high office of the bard to detect this divine element among the grosser labors and pleasures of our earthly being. The present life is not wholly prosaic, precise, tame, and finite. To the gifted eye it abounds in the poetic. The affections, which spread beyond ourselves and stretch far into futurity; the workings of mighty passions, which seem to arm the soul with an almost superhuman energy; the innocent and irrepressible joy of infancy; the bloom and buoyancy and dazzling hopes of youth; the throbbings of the heart when it first wakes to love, and dreams of a happiness too vast for earth; woman, with her beauty and grace and gentleness and freshness of feeling and depth of affection, and her blushes of purity, and the tones and looks which only a mother's heart can inspire—these are all poetical. It is not true that the poet paints a life which does not exist. He only extracts and concentrates, as it were, life's ethereal essence, arrests and condenses its volatile fragrance, brings together its scattered beauties, and prolongs its more refined but evanescent joys; and in this he does well; for it is good to feel that life is not wholly usurped by cares for subsistence and physical gratification, but admits, in measures which may be indefinitely enlarged, sentiments and delights worthy of a higher being. This power of poetry to refine our views of life and happiness is more and more needed as society advances. It is needed to withstand the encroachments of heartless and artificial manners which make civilization so tame and uninteresting. It is needed to counteract the tendency of physical science, which

—being now sought, not, as formerly, for intellectual gratification, but for multiplying bodily comforts—requires a new development of imagination, taste, and poetry to preserve men from sinking into an earthly, material, epicurean life.” \*

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### LECTURE THIRD.

#### ON POETRY IN ITS RELATION TO OUR AGE AND COUNTRY.

AN opinion prevails, which neither wants the support of respectable names nor of plausible reasonings, that the art of poetry, in common with its sister arts, painting and sculpture, cannot in the present age be cultivated with the same degree of success as formerly. It has been supposed that the progress of reason, of science, and of the useful arts has a tendency to narrow the sphere of the imagination, and to repress the enthusiasm of the affections. Poetry, it is alleged, whose office it was to nurse the infancy of the human race, and to give it its first lessons of wisdom, having fulfilled the part to which she was appointed, now resigns her charge to severer instructors. Others, again, refining upon this idea, maintain that not only the age in which we live must fail to produce anything to rival the productions of the ancient masters of song, but that our own country, of all parts of the globe, is likely to remain the most distant from such a distinction.

Our citizens are held to possess, in a remarkable degree, the heedful, calculating, prosaic spirit of the age, while our country is decried as peculiarly barren of the materials of poetry. The scenery of our land these reasoners admit to be beautiful, but they urge that it is the beauty of a face without expression; that it wants the associations of tradition which are the soul and interest of scenery; that it wants the national

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\* William Ellery Channing.

superstitions which linger yet in every district in Europe, and the legends of distant and dark ages and of wild and unsettled times of which the old world reminds you at every step. Nor can our country, they say, ever be more fruitful of these materials than at present. For this is not an age to give birth to new superstitions, but to explode and root out old, however harmless and agreeable they may be, while half the world is already wondering how little the other half will finally believe. Is it likely, then, that a multitude of interesting traditions will spring up in our land to ally themselves with every mountain, every hill, every forest, every river, and every tributary brook. There may be some passages of our early history which associate themselves with particular places, but the argument is that the number of these will never be greatly augmented. The genius of our nation is quiet and commercial. Our people are too much in love with peace and gain, the state of society is too settled, and the laws too well enforced and respected, to allow of wild and strange adventures. There is no romance either in our character, our history, or our condition of society; and, therefore, it is neither likely to encourage poetry, nor capable of supplying it with those materials—materials drawn from domestic traditions and manners—which render it popular.

If these views of the tendency of the present age, and the state of things in our own country, are to be received as true, it must be acknowledged that they are not only exceedingly discouraging to those who make national literature a matter of pride, but, what is worse, that they go far toward causing that very inferiority on which they so strongly insist. Not that there is any danger that the demand for contemporary poetry will entirely cease. Verses have always been, and always will be written, and will always find readers; but it is of some consequence that they should be good verses, that they should exert the healthful and beneficial influences which I consider as belonging to the highest productions of the art; not feebly and imperfectly, but fully and effectually.

If, however, excellence in any art is believed to be unattainable, it will never be attained. There is, indeed, no harm in representing it as it really is, in literature as in every other pursuit, as rare and difficult, for by this means they who aspire to it are incited to more vigorous exertions. The mind of man glories in nothing more than in struggling successfully with difficulty, and nothing more excites our interest and admiration than the view of this struggle and triumph. The distinction of having done what few are able to do is the more enviable from its unfrequency, and attracts a multitude of competitors who catch each other's ardor and imitate each other's diligence. But if you go a step farther, and persuade those who are actuated by a generous ambition that this difficulty amounts to an impossibility, you extinguish their zeal at once. You destroy hope, and with it strength; you drive from the attempt those who were most likely and most worthy to succeed, and you put in their place a crowd of inferior contestants, satisfied with a low measure of excellence, and incapable of apprehending anything higher. Should, then, the views of this subject of which I have spoken be untrue, we may occasion much mischief by embracing them; and it becomes us, before we adopt them, to give them an attentive examination, and to be perfectly satisfied of their soundness.

But, if it be a fact that poetry in the present age is unable to attain the same degree of excellence as formerly, it cannot certainly be ascribed to any change in the original and natural faculties and dispositions of mind by which it is produced and by which it is enjoyed. The theory that men have degenerated in their mental powers and moral temperament is even more absurd than the notion of a decline in their physical strength, and is too fanciful to be combated by grave reasoning. It would be difficult, I fancy, to persuade the easiest credulity that the imagination of man has become, with the lapse of ages, less active and less capable of shaping the materials at its command into pictures of majesty and beauty. Is anybody whimsical enough to suppose that the years that



have passed since the days of Homer have made men's hearts cold and insensible, or deadened the delicacy of their moral perceptions, or rendered them less susceptible of cultivation? All the sources of poetry in the mind, and all the qualities to which it owes its power over the mind, are assuredly left us. Degeneracy, if it has taken place, must be owing to one of two things—either to the absence of those circumstances which, in former times, developed and cherished the poetical faculty to an extraordinary degree, or to the existence of other intellectual interests which, in the present age, tend to repress its natural exercise.

What, then, were the circumstances which fostered the art of poetry in ancient times? They have been defined to be the mystery impressed on all the operations of nature as yet not investigated and traced to their laws—the beautiful systems of ancient mythology, and, after their extinction, the superstitions that linger like ghosts in the twilight of a later age. Let us examine separately each of these alleged advantages. That there is something in whatever is unknown and inscrutable which strongly excites the imagination and awes the heart, particularly when connected with things of unusual vastness and grandeur, is not to be denied. But I deny that much of this mystery is apparent to an ignorant age, and I maintain that no small degree of inquiry and illumination is necessary to enable the mind to perceive it. He who takes all things to be as they appear, who supposes the earth to be a great plain, the sun a moving ball of fire, the heavens a vault of sapphire, and the stars a multitude of little flames lighted up in its arches—what does he think of mysteries, or care for them? But enlighten him a little further. Teach him that the earth is an immense sphere; that the wide land whose bounds he knows so imperfectly is an isle in the great oceans that flow all over it; talk to him of the boundlessness of the skies, and the army of worlds that move through them—and, by means of the knowledge that you communicate, you have opened to him a vast field of the unknown and the wonderful. Thus it ever

was and ever will be with the human mind ; everything which it knows introduces to its observation a greater multitude of things which it does not know ; the clearing up of one mystery conducts it to another ; all its discoveries are bounded by a circle of doubt and ignorance which is wide in proportion to the knowledge it enfolds. It is a pledge of the immortal destinies of the human intellect that it is forever drawn by a strong attraction to the darker edge of this circle, and forever attempting to penetrate the obscurities beyond. The old world, then, is welcome to its mysteries ; we need not envy it on that account : for, in addition to our superior knowledge and as a consequence of it, we have even more of them than it, and they are loftier, deeper, and more spiritual.

But the mythologies of antiquity !—in particular, the beautiful mythologies of Greece and Rome, of which so much enters into the charming remains of ancient poetry ! Beautiful those mythologies unquestionably were, and exceedingly varied and delightfully adapted to many of the purposes of poetry ; yet it may be doubted whether, on the whole, the art gained more by them than it lost. For remark that, so far as mystery is a quality of poetry, it has been taken away almost entirely by the myth. The fault of the myth was that it accounted for everything. It had a god for every operation of nature—a Jupiter to distil the showers and roll the thunder, a Phœbus to guide the chariot of the sun, a divinity to breathe the winds, a divinity to pour out every fountain. It left nothing in obscurity ; everything was seen. Its very beauty consisted in minute disclosures. Thus the imagination was delighted, but neither the imagination nor the feelings were stirred up from their utmost depths. That system gave us the story of a superior and celestial race of beings, to whom human passions were attributed, and who were, like ourselves, susceptible of suffering ; but it elevated them so far above the creatures of earth in power, in knowledge, and in security from the calamities of our condition, that they could be the subjects of little sympathy. Therefore it is that the mythological poetry of the

ancients is as cold as it is beautiful, as unaffecting as it is faultless. And the genius of this mythological poetry, carried into the literature of a later age, where it was cultivated with a less sincere and earnest spirit, has been the destruction of all nature and simplicity. Men forsook the sure guidance of their own feelings and impressions, and fell into gross offences against taste. They wished to describe the passion of love, and they talked of Venus and her boy Cupid and his bow; they would speak of the freshness and glory of morning, and they fell to prattling of Phoebus and his steeds. No wonder that poetry has been thought a trifling art when thus practiced. For my part I cannot but think that human beings, placed among the things of this earth, with their affections and sympathies, their joys and sorrows, and the accidents of fortune to which they are liable, are infinitely a better subject for poetry than any imaginary race of creatures whatever. Let the fountain tell me of the flocks that have drank at it; of the village girl that has gathered spring flowers on its margin; the traveller that has slaked his thirst there in the hot noon, and blessed its waters; the school-boy that has pulled the nuts from the hazels that hang over it as it leaps and sparkles in its cool basin; let it speak of youth and health and purity and gladness, and I care not for the naiad that pours it out. If it must have a religious association, let it murmur of the invisible goodness that fills and feeds its reservoirs in the darkness of the earth.\* The admirers of poetry, then, may give up the ancient mythology without a sigh. Its departure has left us what is better than all it has taken away: it has left us men and women; it has left us the creatures and things of God's universe, to the simple charm of which the cold splendor of that system blinded men's eyes, and to the magnificence of which the rapid progress of science is every day adding new wonders and glories. It has left us, also, a

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\* See Mr. Bryant's own poem of "The Fountain," written thirteen years later, for a beautiful illustration of his principles. "Poetical Works," vol. i, p. 282.

more sublime and affecting religion, whose truths are broader, higher, nobler than any outlook to which its random conjectures ever attained.

With respect to later superstitions, traces of which linger yet in many districts of the civilized world—such as the belief in witchcraft, astrology, the agency of foul spirits in the affairs of men, in ghosts, fairies, water-sprites, and goblins of the wood and the mine—I would observe that the ages which gave birth to this fantastic brood are not those which have produced the noblest specimens of poetry. Their rise supposes a state of society too rude for the successful cultivation of the art. Nor does it seem to me that the bigoted and implicit reception of them is at all favorable to the exercise of poetic talent. Poetry, it is true, sometimes produces a powerful effect by appealing to that innate love of the supernatural which lies at the bottom of every man's heart and mind, and which all are willing to indulge, some freely and some by stealth, but it does this for the most part by means of those superstitions which exist rather in tradition than in serious belief. It finds them more flexible and accommodating; it is able to mould them to its purposes, and at liberty to reject all that is offensive. Accordingly, we find that even the poets of superstitious ages have been fond of going back to the wonders and prodigies of elder days. Those who invented fictions for the age of chivalry, which one would be apt to think had marvels enough of its own, delighted to astonish their readers with tales of giants, dragons, hippogriffs, and enchanters, the home of which was laid in distant ages, or, at least, in remote countries. The best witch ballad, with the exception, perhaps, of "Tam o' Shanter," that I know of is Hogg's "Witch of Fyfe," yet both these were written long after the belief in witches had been laughed out of countenance.

It is especially the privilege of an age which has no engrossing superstitions of its own, to make use in its poetry of those of past ages; to levy contributions from the credulity of



all time, and thus to diversify indefinitely the situations in which its human agents are placed. If these materials are managed with sufficient skill to win the temporary assent of the reader to the probability of the supernatural circumstances related, the purpose of the poet is answered. This is precisely the condition of the present age; it has the advantage over all ages that have preceded it in the abundance of those collected materials, and its poets have not been slow to avail themselves of their aid.

In regard to the circumstances which are thought in the present age to repress and limit the exercise of the poetical faculty, the principal if not the only one is supposed to be the prevalence of studies and pursuits unfavorable to the cultivation of the imagination and to enthusiasm of feeling. True it is that there are studies and pursuits which principally call into exercise other faculties of the mind, and that they are competitors with Poetry for the favor of the public. But it is not certain that the patronage bestowed on them would be extended to her, even if they should cease to exist. Nay, there is strong reason to suppose that they have done something to extend her influence, for they have certainly multiplied the number of readers, and everybody who reads at all sometimes reads poetry, and generally professes to admire what the best judges pronounce excellent, and, perhaps, in time come to enjoy it. Various inclinations continue, as heretofore, to impel one individual to one pursuit, and another to another—one to chemistry and another to poetry—yet I cannot see that their different labors interfere with each other, or that, because the chemist prosecutes his science successfully, therefore the poet should lose his inspiration. Take the example of Great Britain. In no country are the sciences studied with greater success, yet in no country is poetry pursued with more ardor. Spring and autumn reign hand in hand in her literature; it is loaded at once with blossoms and fruits. Does the poetry of that island at the present day—the poetry of Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge, Byron, Southey, Shelley, and

others—smack of the chilling tendencies of the physical sciences? Or, rather, is it not bold, varied, impassioned, irregular, and impatient of precise laws, beyond that of any former age? Indeed, has it not the freshness, the vigor, and perhaps also the disorder, of a new literature?

The amount of knowledge necessary to be possessed by all who would keep pace with the age, as much greater as it is than formerly, is not, I apprehend, in danger of oppressing and smothering poetical talent. Knowledge is the material with which Genius builds her fabrics. The greater its abundance, the more power is required to dispose it into order and beauty, but the more vast and magnificent will be the structure. All great poets have been men of great knowledge. Some have gathered it from books, as Spencer and Milton; others from keen observation of men and things, as Homer and Shakespeare. On the other hand, the poetry of Ossian, whether genuine or not, is an instance of no inconsiderable poetical talent struggling with the disadvantages of a want of knowledge. It is this want which renders it so singularly monotonous. The poverty of the poet's ideas confined his mind to a narrow circle, and his poems are a series of changes rung upon a few thoughts and a few images. Single passages are beautiful and affecting, but each poem, as a whole, is tiresome and uninteresting.

I come, in the last place, to consider the question of our own expectations in literature, and the probability of our producing in the new world anything to rival the immortal poems of the old. Many of the remarks already made on the literary spirit of the present age will apply also to this part of the subject. Indeed, in this point of view, we should do ill to despair of our country, at least until the lapse of many years shall seem to have settled the question against us. Where the fountains of knowledge are by the roadside, and where the volumes from which poetic enthusiasms are caught and fed are in everybody's hands, it would be singularly strange if, amid the multitude of pursuits which occupy our citizens, no-

body should think of taking verse as a path to fame. Yet, if it shall be chosen and pursued with the characteristic ardor of our countrymen, what can prevent its being brought to the same degree of perfection here as in other countries? Not the want of encouragement surely, for the literary man needs but little to stimulate his exertions, and with that little his exertions are undoubtedly greater. Who would think of fattening a race-horse? Complaints of the poverty of poets are as old as their art, but I never heard that they wrote the worse verses for it. It is enough, probably, to call forth their most vigorous efforts, that poetry is admired and honored by their countrymen. With respect to the paucity of national traditions, it will be time to complain of it when all those of which we are possessed are exhausted. Besides, as I have already shown, it is the privilege of poets, when they suppose themselves in need of materials, to seek them in other countries. The best English poets have done this. The events of Spenser's celebrated poem take place within the shadowy limits of fairy-land. Shakespeare has laid the scene of many of his finest tragedies in foreign countries. Milton went out of the world for the subject of his two epics. Byron has taken the incidents of all his poems from outside of England. Southey's best work is a poem of Spain—of chivalry, and of the Roman Church. For the story of one of his narrative poems, Moore went to Persia; for that of another, to the antediluvian world. Wordsworth and Crabbe, each in a different way, and each with great power, abjuring all heroic traditions and recollections, and all aid from the supernatural and the marvellous, have drawn their subjects from modern manners and the simple occurrences of common life. Are they read, for that reason, with any the less avidity by the multitudes who resort to their pages for pastime, for edification, for solace, for noble joy, and for the ecstasies of pure delight?

It has been urged by some, as an obstacle to the growth of elegant literature among us, that our language is a transplanted one, framed for a country and for institutions different

from ours, and, therefore, not likely to be wielded by us with such force, effect, and grace, as it would have been if it had grown up with our nation, and received its forms and its accessions from the exigencies of our experience. It seems to me that this is one of the most unsubstantial of all the brood of phantoms which have been conjured up to alarm us. Let those who press this opinion descend to particulars. Let them point out the peculiar defects of our language in its application to our natural and political situation. Let them show in what respects it refuses to accommodate itself easily and gracefully to all the wants of expression that are felt among us. Till they do this, let us be satisfied that the copious and flexible dialect we speak is as equally proper to be used at the equator as at the poles, and at any intermediate latitude; and alike in monarchies or republics. It has grown up, as every forcible and beautiful language has done, among a simple and unlettered people; it has accommodated itself, in the first place, to the things of nature, and, as civilization advanced, to the things of art; and thus it has become a language full of picturesque forms of expression, yet fitted for the purposes of science. If a new language were to arise among us in our present condition of society, I fear that it would derive too many of its words from the roots used to signify canals, railroads, and steam-boats—things which, however well thought of at present, may perhaps a century hence be superseded by still more ingenious inventions. To try this notion about a transplanted dialect, imagine one of the great living poets of England emigrated to this country. Can anybody be simple enough to suppose that his poetry would be the worse for it?

I infer, then, that all the materials of poetry exist in our own country, with all the ordinary encouragements and opportunities for making a successful use of them. The elements of beauty and grandeur, intellectual greatness and moral truth, the stormy and the gentle passions, the casualties and the changes of life, and the light shed upon man's nature by the story of past times and the knowledge of foreign manners,



have not made their sole abode in the old world beyond the waters. If under these circumstances our poetry should finally fail of rivalling that of Europe, it will be because Genius sits idle in the midst of its treasures.

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## LECTURE FOURTH.

### ON ORIGINALITY AND IMITATION.

I PROPOSE in this lecture to say a few words on the true use and value of imitation in poetry. I mean not what is technically called the imitation of nature, but the studying and copying of models of poetic composition. There is hardly any praise of which writers in the present age, particularly writers in verse, are more ambitious than that of originality. This ambition is a laudable one, for a captivating originality is everything in the art. Whether it consists in presenting familiar things in a new and striking yet natural light, or in revealing secrets of emotion and thought which have lain undetected from the birth of literature, it is one of the most abundant and sure sources of poetic delight. It strikes us with the same sort of feeling as the finding of some beautiful spot in our familiar walks which we had never observed before, or the exhibition of some virtue in the character of a friend which we were ignorant that he possessed. It is of itself a material addition to the literary riches of the country in which it is produced; and it impresses something of its character upon that literature, which lasts as long as the productions in which it is contained are read and remembered.

Nor does it lose its peculiar charm with the lapse of time, for there is an enduring freshness and vividness in its pictures of nature, of action and emotion, that fade not with years. The poetry of Shakespeare, for instance, maintains its original

power over the mind, and no more loses its living beauty by the lapse of ages than the universe grows dim and deformed in the sight of men.

It is not at all strange that a quality of so much importance to the poet should be sought after with great ardor, and that, in the zeal of pursuit, mistakes should sometimes be made as to that characteristic of it which alone is really valuable. Poets have often been willing to purchase the praise of it at the sacrifice of what is better. They have been led, by their overeagerness to attain it, into puerile conceits, into extravagant vagaries of imagination, into overstrained exaggerations of passion, into mawkish and childish simplicity. It has given birth to outrages upon moral principle, upon decency, upon common sense; it has produced, in short, irregularities and affectations of every kind. The grandiloquous nonsense of euphuism, which threatened to overlay and smother English literature in its very cradle, the laborious wit of the metaphysical poets who were contemporaries of Milton, the puling effeminacy of the cockney school, which has found no small favor at the present day—are all children of this fruitful parent.

It seems to me that all these errors arise from not paying sufficient attention to the consideration that poetry is an art; that, like all other arts, it is founded upon a series of experiments—experiments, in this instance, made upon the imagination and the feelings of mankind; that a great deal of its effect depends upon the degree of success with which a sagacious and strong mind seizes and applies the skill of others, and that to slight the experiences of our predecessors on this subject is a pretty certain way to go wrong. For, if we consider the matter a little more narrowly, we shall find that the most original of poets is not without very great obligations to his predecessors and his contemporaries. The art of poetry is not perfected in a day. It is brought to excellence, by slow degrees, from the first rude and imperfect attempts at versification to the finished productions of its greatest masters. The gorgeousness of poetic imagery, the curious felicities of poetic

language, the music of poetic numbers, the spells of words that act like magic on the heart, are not created by one poet in any language, in any country. An innumerable multitude of sentiments, of illustrations, of impassioned forms of expression, of harmonious combinations of words, both fixed in books and floating in conversation, must previously exist either in the vernacular language of the poet or in some other which he has studied, and whose beauties and riches he seeks to transplant into his own, before he can produce any work which is destined to live.

Genius, therefore, with all its pride in its own strength, is but a dependent quality, and cannot put forth its whole powers nor claim all its honors without an amount of aid from the talents and labors of others which it is difficult to calculate. In those fortunate circumstances which permit its most perfect exercise, it takes, it is true, a pre-eminent station; but, after all, it is elevated upon the shoulders of its fellows. It may create something in literature, but it does not create all, great as its merit may be. What it does is infinitely less than what is done for it; the new treasures it finds are far less in value than the old of which it makes use. There is no warrant for the notion maintained by some, that the first poets in any language were great poets, or that, whatever their rank, they did not learn their art from the great poets in other languages. It might as well be expected that a self-taught architect would arise in a country whose inhabitants live in caves, and, without models or instruction, raise the majestic Parthenon and pile up St. Peter's into the clouds.

That there were poets in the English language before Chaucer, some of whom were not unworthy to be his predecessors, is attested by extant monuments of their verse; and, if there had not been, he might have learned his art from the polished poets of Italy, whom he studied and loved. Italy had versifiers before Dante, and, if they were not his masters, he at least found masters in the harmonious poets of a kindred dialect, the Provençal. In the Provençal lan-



guage, the earliest of the cultivated tongues of modern Europe, there arose no great poet. The reason was that their literature had scarcely been brought to that degree of perfection which produces the finest specimens of poetry when the hour of its decline had come. It possessed, it is true, authors innumerable, revivers of the same art, enrichers of the same idiom, and polishers of the same system of versification, yet they never looked for models out of their own literature; they did not study the remains of ancient poetry to avail themselves of its riches; they confined themselves to such improvements and enlargements of the art as were made among themselves; and therefore their progress, though wonderful for the circumstances in which they were placed, was yet limited in comparison with that of those nations who have had access to the treasures they neglected.

In Roman literature there were poets before Lucretius, who is thought to have carried the poetry of the Latins to its highest measure of perfection; before even Ennius, who boasted of having introduced the melody of the hexameter into Latin verse. But Ennius and Lucretius and Horace and Virgil, and all the Roman poets, were, moreover, disciples of the Greeks, and sought to transfuse the spirit of the Grecian literature into their domestic tongue. Of the Greeks we discover no instructors. The oldest of their poems which we possess, the writings of Homer, are also among the most perfect. Yet we should forget all reverence for probability were we to suppose that the art of poetry was born with him. The inferior and more mechanical parts of it must have been the fruit of long and zealous cultivation; centuries must have elapsed, and thousands of trials must have been made, before the musical and various hexameter could have been brought to the perfection in which we find it in his works. His poems themselves are full of allusions to a long antiquity of poetry. All the early traditions of Greece are sprinkled with the names of its minstrels, and the heroic fables of that country are probably, in a great measure, the work of

these primitive bards. Orpheus, whose verse recalled the dead, Sinus and Musæus, whom Virgil, the disciple of Homer, seats in that elysium where he forgets to place his master, are examples of a sort of immortality conferred on mere names in literature, the dim but venerable shadows of the fathers of poetry, whose works have been lost for thousands of years. These were undoubtedly the ancient bards from whose compositions Homer kindled his imagination, and, catching a double portion of their spirit, emulated and surpassed them.

At the present day, however, a writer of poems writes in a language which preceding poets have polished, refined, and filled with forcible, graceful, and musical expressions. He is not only taught by them to overcome the difficulties of rhythmical construction, but he is shown, as it were, the secrets of the mechanism by which he moves the mind of his reader; he is shown ways of kindling the imagination and of interesting the passions which his own sagacity might never have discovered; his mind is filled with the beauty of their sentiments, and their enthusiasm is breathed into his soul. He owes much, also, to his contemporaries as well as to those who have gone before him. He reads their works, and whatever excellence he beholds in them, inspires him with a strong desire to rival it—stronger, perhaps, than that excited by the writings of his predecessors; for such is our reverence for the dead that we are willing to concede to them that superiority which we are anxious to snatch from the living. Even if he should refuse to read the writings of his brethren, he cannot escape the action of their minds on his own. He necessarily comes to partake somewhat of the character of their genius, which is impressed not only on all contemporary literature, but even on the daily thoughts of those with whom he associates. In short, his mind is in a great degree formed by the labors of others; he walks in a path which they have made smooth and plain, and is supported by their strength. Whoever would entirely disclaim imitation, and aspire to the praises of complete originality, should be altogether ignorant

of any poetry written by others, and of all those aids which the cultivation of poetry has lent to prose. Deprive an author of these advantages, and what sort of poetry does any one imagine that he would produce? I dare say it would be sufficiently original, but who will affirm that it could be read?

The poet must do precisely what is done by the mathematician, who takes up his science where his predecessors have left it, and pushes its limits as much farther, and makes as many new applications of its principles, as he can. He must found himself on the excellence already attained in his art, and if, in addition to this, he delights us with new modes of sublimity, of beauty, and of human emotion, he deserves the praise of originality and of genius. If he has nothing of all this, he is entitled to no other honor than belongs to him who keeps alive the practice of a delightful and beautiful art.

This very necessity, however, of a certain degree of dependence upon models in poetry has at some periods led into an opposite fault to the inordinate desire of originality. The student, instead of copying nature with the aid of knowledge derived from these models, has been induced to make them the original, from which the copy was to be drawn. He has been led to take an imperfect work—and all human works are imperfect—as the standard of perfection, and to dwell upon it with such reverence that he comes to see beauties where no beauties are, and excellence in place of positive defects. Thus the study of poetry, which should encourage the free and unlimited aspirations of the mind after all that is noble and beautiful, has been perverted into a contrivance to chill and repress them. It has seduced its admirers from an admiration of the works of God to an idolatry for the works of men; it has carried them from living and inexhaustible sources of poetic inspiration to drink at comparatively scanty and impure channels; it has made them to linger by the side of these instead of using them as guides to ascend to their original fountain.

It is of high importance, then, to inquire what are the proper limits of poetic imitation, or, in other words, by what

means the examples and labors of others may be made use of in strengthening, and prevented from enfeebling, the native vigor of genius. No better rule has been given for this purpose than to take no particular poem nor poet, nor class of poets, as the pattern of poetic composition, but to study the beauties of all. All good poems have their peculiar merits and faults, all great poets their points of strength and weakness, all schools of poetry their agreements with good taste and their offences against it. To confine the attention and limit the admiration to one particular sort of excellence, not only tends to narrow the range of the intellectual powers, but most surely brings along with it the peculiar defects to which that sort of excellence is allied, and into which it is most apt to deviate. Thus, a poet of the Lake school, by endeavoring too earnestly after simplicity, may run into childishness; a follower of Byron, in his pursuit of energy of thought, and the intense expression of passion, may degenerate into abruptness, extravagance, or obscurity; a disciple of Scott, in his zeal for easy writing, may find himself indicting something little better than doggerel, or, at least, very dull and feeble verse; an imitator of Leigh Hunt, too intent on keeping up the vivacity and joyousness of the poetic temperament, may forget his common sense; and a poet of the school of Pope may write very polished, well-balanced verses with a great deal of antithesis and very little true feeling.

Still, these several schools have all their excellences; they have all some qualities to be admired and loved and dwelt upon. Let the student of poetry dwell upon them as long as he pleases, let him study them until they are incorporated into his mind, but let him give his admiration to no one of them exclusively. It is remarkable to what a degree the great founders of the several styles of English poetry, even of the least lofty, varied, and original, have pursued this universal search after excellence. When Pope—brilliant, witty, harmonious, and, within a certain compass, a great master of language—had fixed the poetical taste of his age, we all know what a crowd of imitators arose in his train, and how rapidly poetry declined.



But the imitators of Pope failed to do what Pope did. Great as was his partiality for the French school, and closely as he had formed himself on the model of Boileau, he yet disdained not to learn much from other instructors. He went back for gems of thought and graces of style to the earlier writers of English verse—to the poets of the Elizabethan age, and, farther still, to the venerable Chaucer. He was a passionate admirer and a restorer of Shakespeare, and, by recommending him to the English people, prepared the way for the downfall of his own school, but not, I hope, for the oblivion of his own writings.

This relish of poetic excellence in all its forms, and in whatever school or style of poetry it is found, does not, I apprehend, lead to a less lively apprehension of the several merits of these styles, while at the same time it opens the eyes of the student to their several defects and errors. In this way the mind forms to itself a higher standard of excellence than exists in any of them—a standard compounded of the characteristic merits of all, and free from any of their imperfections. To this standard it will refer all their compositions; to this it will naturally aspire; and, by the contemplation of this, it will divest itself of that blind and idolatrous reverence for certain models of composition and certain dogmas of ancient criticism which are the death of the hopes and inspirations of the poet.

It is long since the authority of great names was disregarded in matters of science. Ages ago the schools shook themselves loose from the fetters of Aristotle. He no more now delivers the oracles of philosophy than the priests of Apollo deliver the oracles of religion. Why should the chains of authority be worn any longer by the heart and the imagination than by the reason? This is a question which the age has already answered. The genius of modern times has gone out in every direction in search of originality. Its ardor has not always been compensated by the discovery of its object, but under its auspices a fresh, vigorous, and highly original poetry has grown up. The fertile soil of modern literature has

thrown up, it is true, weeds among the flowers, but the flowers are of immortal bloom and fragrance, and the weeds are soon outworn. It is no longer necessary that a narrative poem should be written on the model of the ancient epic; a lyric composition is not relished the more, perhaps not so much, for being Pindaric or Horatian; and it is not required that a satire should remind the reader of Juvenal. It is enough for the age if beautiful diction, glowing imagery, strong emotion, and fine thought are so combined as to give them their fullest effect upon the mind. The end of poetry is then attained, no matter by what system of rules.

If it were to be asked which is the more likely to produce specimens of poetry worthy of going down to posterity, which is the more favorable to the enlargement of the human mind and the vigorous action of all its faculties on the variety of objects and their relations by which it is surrounded—an age distinguished for too great carefulness of imitation, or an age remarkable for an excessive ambition of originality—I think that a wise decision must be in favor of the latter. Whatever errors in taste may spring from the zeal for new developments of genius and the disdain of imitation, their influence is of short duration. The fantastic brood of extravagances and absurdities to which they give birth soon die and are forgotten, for nothing is immortal in literature but what is truly excellent. On the other hand, such an age may and does produce poems worthy to live. The works of the early Italian poets were composed in such an age; the proudest monuments of English verse are the growth of such a spirit; the old poetry of Spain, the modern poetry of Germany, grew into beauty and strength under such auspices. Men walked, as they should ever do, with a confident step by the side of these ancient masters, of whom they learned this art; they studied their works, not that they might resemble, but that they might surpass them.

But one of the best fruits of such an age is the remarkable activity into which it calls the human intellect. Those things

which are ours rather by memory than by the natural growth of the mind lie on its surface, already wrought into distinct shape, and are brought into use with little effort. But for the native conceptions of the mind, the offspring of strong mental excitement, it is necessary to go deeper and to toil more intensely. It is not without a vigorous exercise that the intellect searches for these among its stores, extricates them from the obscurity in which they are first beheld, ascertains their parts and detains them until they are moulded into distinctness and symmetry, and embodied in language.

But when once a tame and frigid taste has possessed the tribe of poets, when all their powers are employed in servilely copying the works of their predecessors, it is not only impossible that any great work should be produced among them, but the period of a literary reformation, of the awakening of genius, is postponed to a distant futurity. It is the quality of such a state of literature, by the imposing precision of its rules and the ridicule it throws on everything out of its own beaten track, to perpetuate itself indefinitely. The happy appearance of some extraordinary genius, educated under different influences than those operating on the age, and compelling admiration by the force of his talents; or, perhaps, some great moral or political revolution, by unsettling old opinions and familiarizing men to daring speculations—can alone have any effect to remove it. The mind grows indolent, or, at least, enfeebled, by the want of those higher exercises to which it was destined. At the same time, the spirit of poetry, as seen in its power of elevating the mind, of humanizing the affections, and expelling sordid appetites, is no longer felt, or only felt by a few, who conceal in their own bosoms the secret of its power over them.



## EARLY AMERICAN VERSE.\*

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OF the poetry of the United States different opinions have been entertained, and prejudice on the one side and partiality on the other have equally prevented a just and rational estimate of its merits. Abroad our literature has fallen under unmerited contumely, from those who were but slenderly acquainted with the subject on which they professed to decide, and at home it must be confessed that the swaggering and pompous pretensions of many have done not a little to provoke and excuse the ridicule of foreigners. Either of these extremes exerts an injurious influence on the cause of letters in our country. To encourage exertion and embolden merit to come forward, it is necessary that they should be acknowledged and rewarded. Few men have the confidence to solicit what is wantonly withheld, or the courage to tread a path which presents no prospect but the melancholy wrecks of those who have gone before them. National gratitude, national pride—every high and generous feeling that attaches us to the land of our birth, or that exalts our characters as indi-

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\* This essay was published in the "North American Review" of July, 1818, p. 198, as a criticism of "An Essay on American Poetry, with several miscellaneous pieces on a variety of subjects, sentimental, descriptive, moral, and patriotic. By Solyman Brown, A. M. New Haven: Flagg & Gray, 1818." Imperfect as it is in many respects, it has yet a peculiar historic interest as the judgment of the nascent young poet upon most of his more prominent predecessors. We print from a corrected copy, which differs a little from the original form.

viduals—ask of us that we should foster the infant literature of our country, and that genius and industry, employing their efforts to hasten its perfection, should receive from our hands that celebrity which reflects as much honor on the nation which confers it as on those to whom it is extended.

On the other hand, it is not necessary for these purposes—it is even detrimental—to bestow on mediocrity the praise due to excellence, and still more so is the attempt to persuade ourselves and others into an admiration of the faults of favorite writers. We make but a contemptible figure in the eyes of the world, and set ourselves up as objects of pity to our posterity, when we affect to rank the poets of our own country with those mighty masters of song who have flourished in Greece, Italy, and Britain. Such extravagant admiration may spring from a praiseworthy and patriotic motive, but it seems to us that it defeats its own object of encouraging our literature, by seducing those who would aspire to the favor of the public into an imitation of imperfect models, and leading them to rely too much on the partiality of their countrymen to overlook their deficiencies. Were our rewards bestowed only on what is intrinsically meritorious, merit alone would have any apology for appearing before the public. The poetical adventurer should be taught that it is only the productions of genius, taste, and diligence that can find favor at the bar of criticism; that his writings are not to be applauded merely because they are written by an American, and are not decidedly bad; and that he must produce some more satisfactory evidence of his claim to celebrity than an extract from the parish register. To show him what we expect of him, it is as necessary to point out the faults of his predecessors as to commend their excellences. He must be taught as well what to avoid as what to imitate. This is the only way of diffusing and preserving a pure taste, both among those who read and those who write, and, in our opinion, the only way of affording merit a proper and effectual encouragement.

It must, however, be allowed that the poetry of the United

States, though it has not reached any high degree of perfection, is yet, perhaps, better than it could have been expected to be, considering that our nation has scarcely seen two centuries since its founders erected their cabins on its soil, and that our citizens are just beginning to find leisure to attend to intellectual refinements, to indulge in intellectual luxury, and to afford the means of rewarding intellectual excellence.

For the first century after the settlement of this country, the few quaint and unskilful specimens of poetry which yet remain to us are looked upon merely as objects of curiosity, are preserved only in the cabinet of the antiquary, and give little pleasure if read without reference to the age and people which produced them. After this period a purer taste began to prevail. The poems of the Rev. John Adams, written in the early part of the eighteenth century, which have been considered as no bad specimen of the poetry of his time, are tolerably free from the faults of the generation that preceded him, and show the dawnings of an ambition of correctness and elegance. The poetical writings of Joseph Green, also, who wrote about the middle of the same century, have been admired for their humor and the playful ease of their composition. But previous to the contest which terminated in the independence of the United States we can hardly be said to have had any national poetry at all. Literary ambition was not yet awakened among us; there was little motive for it, and few rewards. We were contented to consider ourselves as participating in the literary fame of that nation of which we were a part, and of which many of us were natives, and therefore aspired to no separate distinction. And, indeed, we might well lay an equal claim, with those who remained on the British soil, to whatever glory the genius and learning, as well as the virtue and bravery, of other times reflected on the British name. These were qualities which ennobled our common ancestors; and, though their graves were not with us, and we were at a distance from the scenes and haunts which were hallowed by their deeds, their studies, and their contempla-

tions, yet we brought with us and preserved all the more valuable gifts which they left to their posterity and to mankind—their illumination, their piety, their spirit of liberty, reverence for their memory and example, and all the proud tokens of a generous descent.

Yet here was no theatre for the display of literary talent. The worshippers of fame could find no altars erected to that divinity in America, and he who would live by his pen must seek patronage in the parent country. Some men of taste and learning among us might occasionally amuse their leisure with poetical trifles, but a country struggling with the difficulties of colonization, and possessing no superfluous wealth, wanted any other class of men rather than poets. Accordingly, we find the specimens of American poetry before this period mostly desultory and occasional—rare and delicate exotics, cultivated only by the curious.

When we became an independent empire, a different spirit began to manifest itself, and the general ambition to distinguish ourselves as a nation was not without its effect on our literature. It seems to us that it is from this time only that we can be said to have poets of our own, and from this period it is that we must date the origin of American poetry. About this time flourished Francis Hopkinson, whose humorous ballad, entitled “The Battle of the Kegs,” is in most of our memories, and whose other attempts, though deficient in vigor, are not inelegant. The keen and forcible invectives of Dr. Church, which are still recollected by his contemporaries, received an additional edge and sharpness from the exasperated feelings of the times. A writer in verse of inferior note was Philip Freneau, whose pen seems to have been chiefly employed on political subjects, and whose occasional productions, distinguished by a coarse strength of sarcasm, and abounding with allusions to passing events, which are perhaps their greatest merit, attracted in their time considerable notice, and, in the year 1786, were collected into a volume.

But the influence of that principle which awoke and ani-



mated the exertions of all who participated in the political enthusiasm of that time was still more strongly exemplified in the Connecticut poets—Trumbull, Dwight, Barlow, Humphreys, and Hopkins. In all the productions of these authors, there is a pervading spirit of nationality and patriotism, a desire to reflect credit on the country to which they belonged, which seems, as much as individual ambition, to have prompted their efforts, and which at times gives a certain glow and interest to their manner. “McFingal,” the most popular of the writings of the former of these poets, first appeared in the year 1782. This pleasant satire on the adherents of Britain in those times may be pronounced a tolerably successful imitation of the great work of Butler, though, like every other imitation of that author, it wants that varied and inexhaustible fertility of allusion which made all subjects of thought, the lightest and most abstruse parts of learning—everything in the physical and moral world, in art and nature, the playthings of his wit. The work of Trumbull cannot be much praised for the purity of its diction. Yet, perhaps, great scrupulousness in this particular was not consistent with the plan of the author, and, to give the scenes of this poem their full effect, it might have been thought necessary to adopt the familiar dialect of the country and the times. We think his “Progress of Dulness” a more pleasing poem, more finished and more perfect in its kind, and, though written in the same manner, more free from the constraint and servility of imitation. The graver poems of Trumbull contain some vigorous and animated declamation.

Of Dr. Dwight we would speak with all the respect due to talents, to learning, to piety, and a long life of virtuous usefulness; but we must be excused from feeling any high admiration of his poetry. It seems to us modelled upon a manner altogether too artificial and mechanical. There is something strained, violent, and out of nature in all his attempts. His “Conquest of Canaan” will not secure immortality to its author. In this work he has been considered by some critics



as by no means happy in the choice of his fable. However this may be, he has certainly failed to avail himself of the advantages it offered him; his epic wants the creations and colorings of an inventive and poetical fancy—the charm which, in the hands of a genius, communicates an interest to the simplest incidents, and something of the illusion of reality to the most improbable fictions. The versification is remarkable for its unbroken monotony. Yet it contains splendid passages, which, separated from the body of the work, might be admired, but a few pages pall both on the ear and the imagination. It has been urged in its favor that the writer was young. The poetry of his maturer years does not, however, seem to possess greater beauties or fewer faults. The late Dr. Dennie at one time exerted his ingenuity to render this poem popular with his countrymen; in the year 1800 he published, in the “Farmers’ Museum”—a paper printed at Walpole, of which he was the editor—a series of observations and criticisms on the “Conquest of Canaan,” after the manner of Addison in those numbers of the “Spectator” which made Milton a favorite with the English people. But this attempt did not meet with success; the work would not sell, and loads of copies yet cumber the shelves of the booksellers. In the other poems of Dr. Dwight, which are generally liable to the same criticisms, he sometimes endeavors to descend to a more familiar style, and entertains his reader with laborious attempts at wit; and here he is still unsuccessful. His “Greenfield Hill,” and that most unfortunate of his productions, the “Triumph of Infidelity,” will confirm the truth of our remarks.

Barlow, when he began to write, was a poet of no inconsiderable promise. His “Hasty Pudding,” one of his earliest productions, is a good specimen of mock-heroic verse, and his “Vision of Columbus,” at the time of its first appearance, attracted much attention, and was hailed as an earnest of better things. It is no small praise to say that, when appointed by the General Assembly of Churches in Connecticut to revise Watts’s “Version of the Psalms,” and to versify such as

were omitted in that work, he performed the task in a manner which made a near approach to the simplicity and ease of that poet who, according to Dr. Johnson, "has done better than anybody else what nobody has done well." In his maturer years Barlow became ambitious of distinguishing himself and doing honor to his country by some more splendid and important exertions of his talents, and, for this purpose, projected a national epic, in which was sung the "Discovery of America," the successful struggle of the States in the defence of their liberties, and the exalted prospects which were opening before them. It is to be regretted that a design, so honorable and so generously conceived, should have failed. In 1807 appeared the "Columbiad," which was his poem of the "Vision of Columbus," much enlarged, and with such variations as the feelings and reflections of his riper age and judgment led him to make. The "Columbiad" is not, in our opinion, so pleasing a poem in its present form as in that in which it was originally written. The plan of the work is utterly destitute of interest, and that, which was at first sufficiently wearisome, has become doubly so by being drawn out to its present length. Nor are the additions of much value, on account of the taste in which they are composed. Barlow, in his later poetry, attempted to invigorate his style, but, instead of drawing strength and salubrity from the pure wells of ancient English, he corrupted and debased it with foreign infusions. The imposing but unchaste glitter which distinguished the manner of Darwin and his imitators, appears likewise to have taken strong hold on his fancy, and he has not scrupled to bestow on his poem much of this meretricious decoration. But, notwithstanding the bad taste in which his principal work is composed, notwithstanding he cannot be said to write with much pathos or many of the native felicities of fancy, there is yet enough in the poetry of Mr. Barlow to prove that, had he fixed his eye on purer models, he might have excelled, not indeed in epic or narrative poetry nor in the delineation of passion and feeling, but in that calm, lofty, sustained style which suits best

with topics of morality and philosophy, and for which the vigor and spirit of his natural manner, whenever he permits it to appear, show him to have been well qualified.

Humphreys was a poet of humbler pretensions. His writings, which were first collected in 1790, are composed in a better taste than those of the two last, and, if he has less genius, he has likewise fewer faults. Some of his lighter pieces are sufficiently pretty. He is most happy when he aims at nothing beyond an elegant mediocrity, and, to do him justice, this is generally the extent of his ambition. On the whole, he may be considered as sustaining a respectable rank among the poets of our country.

A writer of a different cast from those we have mentioned, and distinguished by a singular boldness of imagination as well as great humor, was Dr. Lemuel Hopkins, who, in 1786 and the year following, in conjunction with Trumbull, Barlow, and Humphreys, and other wits of that time, wrote the "*Anarchiad*," a satire, on a plan similar to that of the "*Rolliad*," which appeared in the "*New Haven Gazette*" of those years, and of which the wildest parts are attributed to him. He was likewise author of the "*Speech of Hesper*," and some smaller poems, which have been praised for their wit. There is a coarseness, a want of polish in his style, and his imagination, daring and original, but unrestrained by a correct judgment, often wanders into absurdities and extravagances. Still, if he had all the madness, he must be allowed to have possessed some of the inspiration of poetry.

One material error of taste pervades the graver productions of these authors, into which it would seem they were led by copying certain of the poets of England, who flourished near the period in which they began to write. It was their highest ambition to attain a certain lofty, measured, declamatory manner—an artificial elevation of style, from which it is impossible to rise or descend without abruptness and violence, and which allows just as much play and freedom to the faculties of the writer as a pair of stilts allows the body. The

imagination is confined to one trodden circle, doomed to the chains of a perpetual mannerism, and condemned to tinkle the same eternal time with its fetters. Their versification, though not equally exceptionable in all, is formed upon the same stately model of balanced and wearisome regularity. Another fault, which arises naturally enough out of the peculiar style which we have imputed to these poets, is the want of pathos and feeling in their writings; the heart is rarely addressed, and never with much power or success. Amid this coldness of manner, sameness of imagery, and monotony of versification, the reader lays down his book, dazzled and fatigued.

In 1800 appeared the poems of William Clifton, who fell, at the age of twenty-seven, a victim to that scourge of our climate which ceases not to waste when other diseases are sated—the pulmonary consumption. There is none of our American poetry on which we dwell with more pleasure, mingled, indeed, with regret at the untimely fate of the writer, than these charming remains. Amid many of the immature effusions of his greener years, and unfinished productions which were never meant to meet the eye of the world, there are to be found specimens of poetry, not only more delicate, classical, and polished, but more varied in imagery, and possessing more of that flexibility of style, of the want of which in others we have complained, and more faithful to nature and the feelings, than it has often been our lot to meet with in the works of our native poets. In his later and more finished productions, his diction is refined to an unusual degree of purity, and through this lucid medium the creations of his elegant fancy appear, with nothing to obscure their loveliness.

The posthumous works of St. John Honeywood, Esq., were published in the year 1801. These modest remains, the imperfect but vigorous productions of no common mind, have not been noticed as they deserved. They contain many polished and nervous lines.

We should not expect to be easily pardoned were we to



pass by the writings of a poet who enjoyed, during his lifetime, so extensive a popularity as the late Mr. Robert Treat Paine. The first glow of admiration, which the splendid errors of his manner excited in the public, is now over, and we can calmly estimate his merits and defects. He must be allowed to have possessed an active and fertile fancy. Even in the misty obscurity which often shrouds his conceptions, not only from the understanding of the reader, but, it would seem, from that of the writer himself, there sometimes break out glimpses of greatness and majesty. Yet, with a force and exuberance of imagination which, if soberly directed, might have gained him the praise of magnificence, he is perpetually wandering in search of conceits and extravagances. He is ambitious of the epigrammatic style, and often bewilders himself with attempts to express pointedly what he does not conceive clearly. More instances of the false sublime might, perhaps, be selected from the writings of this poet than from those of any other of equal talents who lived in the same period. The brilliancy of Paine's poetry is like the brilliancy of frost-work—cold and fantastic. Who can point out the passage in his works in which he speaks to the heart in its own language? He was a fine but misguided genius.

We have now given a brief summary of what we conceived to be the characteristic merits and defects of our most celebrated American poets. Some names, of which we are not at present aware, equally deserving of notice with those whom we have mentioned, may have been omitted; some we have passed over, because we were not willing to disturb their passage to that oblivion toward which, to the honor of our country, they were hastening; and some elegant productions of later date we have not commented on, because we were unwilling to tire our readers with a discussion which they may think already exhausted.

With respect to the style of poetry prevailing at the present day in our country, we apprehend that it will be found, in too many instances, tinged with a sickly and affected imitation



of the peculiar manner of some of the late popular poets of England. We speak not of a disposition to emulate whatever is beautiful and excellent in their writings, still less would we be understood as intending to censure that sort of imitation which, exploring all the treasures of English poetry, culls from all a diction that shall form a natural and becoming dress for the conceptions of the writer—this is a course of preparation which every one ought to go through before he appears before the public—but we desire to set a mark on that servile habit of copying which adopts the vocabulary of some favorite author, and apes the fashion of his sentences, and cramps and forces the ideas into a shape which they would not naturally have taken, and of which the only recommendation is, not that it is most elegant or most striking, but that it bears some resemblance to the manner of him who is proposed as a model. This way of writing has an air of poverty and meanness; it seems to indicate a paucity of reading as well as a perversion of taste; it might almost lead us to suspect that the writer had but one or two examples of poetical composition in his hands, and was afraid of expressing himself, except according to some formula which they might contain; and it ever has been, and ever will be, the resort of those who are sensible that their works need some factitious recommendation to give them even a temporary popularity.

On the whole, there seems to be more good taste among those who read than those who write poetry in our country. With respect to the poets whom we have enumerated, and whose merits we have discussed, we think the judgment pronounced on their works by the public will be found, generally speaking, just. They hold that station in our literature to which they are entitled, and could hardly be admired more than they are without danger to the taste of the nation. We know of no instance in which great poetical merit has come forward, and, finding its claims unallowed, been obliged to retire to the shade from which it emerged. Whenever splendid talents of this description shall appear, we believe that there

will be found a disposition to encourage and reward them. The fondness for literature is fast increasing, and, if this were not the case, the patrons of literature have multiplied, of course, and will continue to multiply, with the mere growth of our population. The best popular English works of the day are often reprinted here—they are dispersed all over the Union—they are found in everybody's hands—they are made the subject of everybody's conversation. What should hinder our native works, if equal in merit, from meeting an equally favorable reception? . . .\*

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\* Chronologically, this and the next selection should have come in before the Lectures on Poetry, but I have broken the order of time here, because of the superior importance of the lectures.—ED.

## ON TRISYLLABIC FEET IN IAMBIC MEASURE.\*

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RHYMED heroic verse, though one of the noblest kinds of verse in our language, has never attained its full perfection. Our ears have become so habituated to what are called smooth verses, that is, to the unvaried iambic (or as little varied as the genius of our tongue will permit), and to the sense concluding with the couplet, so as to make every two correspondent rhyming lines throughout a poem a perfect stanza, and this taste has been so long established and so often confirmed by the judgments of critics, that a very considerable literary revolution must yet take place before any improvement in the fabric of this species of verse will meet with general reception and approval. The precepts of Lord Kames and other writers, who framed their rules of versification chiefly from the writings of Pope, as the ancient critics gathered their rules for the composition of an epic poem from an analysis of the *Iliad*, are still in vogue; and the dogmas of Johnson on this subject are regarded with reverence, though his ear, delighted as it was

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\* A part of this essay was published in the "North American Review" for September, 1819; but what is here given from an original manuscript, somewhat illegible, appears to have been written long before the fragment was printed, some of it as early as 1811. It may be regarded as a contribution by the author to that poetic revolution which Wordsworth had begun at the close of the last century, and as justifying his own departure from the models which he had sedulously cultivated in his attempts at verse-making up to that time.

with monotony, and insensible as it was to music, was wearied, as he somewhat reluctantly confessed, with the practices to which Pope so invariably adhered.

I am aware that of late much has been done in England toward effecting an improvement in this respect; yet it has not always been done skilfully, and those who have attempted it have sometimes exhibited an odd mixture of the old manner with the new. The versification of Crabbe is least exceptionable whenever he forgets to imitate the rhythm of his predecessors. Byron seems hardly to have formed any system of versification, nor has he sufficiently studied variety; Leigh Hunt has erred in the contrary extreme, for in his story of "Rimini," he labors violently to be harsh; and sometimes his lines are as rugged as those of old Donne, in whom many passages are absolutely unreadable. I do not know whether those who are best qualified to judge on this subject will agree with me when I prefer the versification of Moore in his "Veiled Prophet of Khorassan" to that of any other poet of the present day. It is true that it wants compression; it is true that many of his insufferably long periods, running through couplet after couplet, beget a suspicion that some of the fine images of which they are made up were introduced more because they were necessary to the rhyme than to the sense; but it is true likewise that there are passages free from these faults—passages which for vigorous and varied harmony are not surpassed by any in our language.

Against the innovations proposed, however, there is still a strong party, both in England and in our own country, which numbers in its ranks men of taste and learning, elegant writers, acute and accomplished critics, against whom one would not willingly enter the lists of combat. These, although they may perhaps allow that there is a little too much monotony in the structure of Pope's lines, would yet approve a versification modelled in general upon his style. It will not, I hope, be deemed indecorous to suggest to them that the example of men, whose genius and learning we have been taught to ad-



mire almost from our cradles, is apt to mould our opinions and tastes on such subjects before we have had time to examine the reasons on which they are founded, and that to the ear which is accustomed to a certain rhythm or measured succession of sounds every other must at first seem harsh and unpleasing. No man whose poetical reading has been confined to rhyme ever comprehended at first the beauty and sweetness of blank verse; no man accustomed to one particular kind of measure will on the instant perceive all the melody of another; and it is the same with different styles of the same kind of verse. We grow attached to the manner with which we have long been familiar, and it fastens itself on our taste by a thousand pleasing associations. Where the ear is inured to the regular iambic, and to pauses at the end of every couplet, and, whenever it is possible, at the end of every line, it perceives nothing but harshness and irregularity in more varied pauses and a greater license of prosody.

Few readers of verse can admire more than I do the acknowledged excellences of the writings of Pope—the compression which gives so much force to his precepts and so much point to his wit, and the dexterity and felicity of his satire, and I speak of his merits or his faults here only as they relate to his versification. He must be regarded as in a great measure the founder and perfecter of that style of versification which prevailed as well among his contemporaries as among those who wrote after him till a very few years since, and for the adoption of which, by the poet and his admirers, it is not difficult to account. Everybody who has heard children or illiterate persons read poetry must have remarked their peculiar notion of quantity. In reading verses of six, eight, or ten syllables, they make an iambic of every foot, placing a marked stress upon every other syllable, in defiance of accent and emphasis, and pausing at the end of every line, to the utter destruction of the sense, in order to preserve the jingle of the rhyme. This puerile habit is not apt to be corrected until we become sick of the chime and the see-saw, from a wider



acquaintance with poetical examples, and begin to perceive a beauty in variety. In some instances, in fact, it continues during life, as those can attest who have heard the devotional poetry of Dr. Watts from the lips of many of our reverend clergy. This habit is acquired at first from observing the general structure of verse; as, for example, that an iambic is the basis of lines of ten syllables, and the trochee of lines of seven syllables, and as general rules pass always before exceptions, the introduction of any other feet into these kinds of verse, except of the iambic in the one and of the trochee in the other, seems to the unpracticed and inexperienced ear irregular, unpleasing, and a manifest transgression of the laws of metre.

We are not, therefore, to wonder that Pope—who wrote his pastorals (which his admirers call his most perfect specimen of melodious numbers) at an age when he could hardly be supposed to have divested himself of childish taste—should have adhered, when he acquired a greater command of language, as uniformly as possible to the iambic, and should have contrived pauses in the sense at the end of every couplet, and often at the end of every line, so that the rhyme might be readily perceived without violence to the meaning. Nor is it any more a matter of surprise that this way of versification should have been so favorably received. It was novel, it was uniform in the quantity beyond all former example, and the pauses were balanced with singular regularity. The multitudes who read poetry like children found the manner in some measure reconciled with the meaning. And all this was brought about with such rare ease and so little embarrassment in the diction that, on the whole, the effect was extremely imposing, and well calculated to attract admiration, were it merely as a specimen of ingenuity. It was, moreover, natural that Pope, seeing the applause which this style of versification had gained him, should have gone on writing verses in the same way to the end of his life, and it was equally natural that his success should have led those

who wrote in his own time and after him to imitate so pleasing a model.

But to the more immediate purpose of this paper, which is to show, particularly by citations from the older poets, that there may be departures from the accepted rules without marring the beauty of the structure.

The only feet of three syllables which can be employed in English iambs are either those which have the two first short and the third long or those which have all three short—the anapest and the tribrach. A certain use of these feet in that kind of verse has been allowed from the very beginnings of English poetry when either the two first syllables in these feet are vowels or diphthongs, as in the following instance :

“To scorn | delights | and live | labo|řioŭs dāys,”

or when the letter *r* only is interposed between the vowels, as in the following :

“And ev|ery flower | that sad | embroid|ěřy wēars,”

or when the consonant *n* comes between the vowels, and the vowel preceding this letter is so obscurely or rapidly pronounced as to leave it doubtful whether it may be considered as forming a distinct syllable, as in this instance :

“Under | the op|ěňing eře|lids of | the morn.”

Sometimes the liquid *l*, in a like position, gives the poet a like liberty, as in the following example :

“Wafted | the trav|ěllěr tō | the beau|teous west.”

In all these cases the three syllables were, until lately, written with a contraction which shortened them into two, and it came at length to be regarded as a rule, by most critics and authors, that no trisyllabic feet should be admitted in iambic measure where such a contraction was not allowed, or where the two first syllables might not, by some dexterity of pronunciation, be blended into one. This was, in effect, excluding all trisyllabic feet whatever ; but they are now generally written with-

out the contraction, and in reading poetry it is not, I believe, usually observed.

There is a freer use of trisyllabic feet in iambic verse, of equal antiquity with the former, but which was afterward proscribed as irregular and inharmonious, and particularly avoided by those who wrote in rhyme. I allude to all those cases where the two first syllables will not admit of a contraction, or, which is nearly the same thing, refuse to coalesce in the pronunciation. These may be called pure trisyllabic feet, and the following is an example of this kind:

“Impos|tor, do | not charge | most in|nōcēt nāture.”

In excluding liberties of this description, it is difficult to tell what has been gained, but it is easy to see what has been lost; the rule has been observed to the frequent sacrifice of beauty of expression, and variety and vivacity of numbers.

I think that I can show, by examples drawn from some of our best poets, that the admission of pure trisyllabic feet into iambic verse is agreeable to the genius of that kind of measure as well as to the habits of our language. I begin with those who have written in blank verse. The sweetest passages of Shakespeare—those which appear to have been struck out in the ecstasy of genius, and flow with that natural melody which is peculiar to him—are generally sprinkled with freedoms of this kind. Take the following specimen among a thousand others—part of the eloquent apostrophe of Timon to gold:

“Thou ever young, fresh, loved, and *delicate wooer*,  
Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow  
That lies in Dian’s lap ! thou *visible god*  
That solderest close impossibilities  
And mak’st them kiss !”

Most of the older dramatists are guilty of the same thing—some more frequently than others—but none appear to have avoided it with much care. Let me point to the most perfect master of poetic modulation, perhaps, in our language—a man

to whom nature had given an exquisite ear, whose taste had been improved and exalted by a close study of the best models in the most harmonious tongues we know, and who emulated, in their own languages, the sweetness of the Latin and Italian poets. The heroic verse of Milton abounds with instances of pure trisyllabic feet. The following passage is certainly not deficient in harmony :

“And when the *river of bliss*, through midst of heaven,  
Rolls o’er Elysian flowers her amber stream,  
With these, that never fade, the *spirits elect*  
Bind their resplendent locks inwreathed with beams.”

Dryden sometimes admits feet of this kind in his tragedies in blank verse, and many other dramatic poets, his contemporaries and successors, have taken the same liberty. In the celebrated work of Young I find no instance of this sort, and it is not hard to tell the reason. Young was a profound and blind admirer of Pope; nor is it to be wondered at that he, who, at the recommendation of his friend, gave his days and nights to the study of Thomas Aquinas as a system of divinity, should take that friend for a model in poetry. Young, in his “Night Thoughts,” endeavored to do that for which of all things his genius least fitted him—to imitate the manner of Pope; and the consequence was that he injured the fine flow of his own imagination by violent attempts at point and an awkward sententiousness. It was like setting the Mississippi to spout little *jets d’eau* and turn children’s water-wheels. He was probably afraid to use feet of three syllables, because he did not find them in the works of his master.

About his time, and for some years afterward, the exclusion of pure trisyllabic feet from blank verse seems to have been complete. I find no traces of them in Thomson and Dyer, nor in the heavy writings of Glover and Cumberland. Akenside’s “Pleasures of Imagination” has been highly esteemed for the art with which the numbers are modulated and the pauses adjusted. In this poem, as it was first written,



there are no instances of the sort of which I am speaking ; but, when the author in the maturity of his faculties revised and partly wrote over the work, he seems to have been in some measure dissatisfied with that versification which the world had praised so much. In looking over this second draught of his work, I have noted the following deviations from his former practice :

“Furies which curse the earth, and make the blows,  
The heaviest blows, of nature’s *innocent hand*  
Seem sport—”

“I checked my prow, and thence, with eager steps,  
The *city of Minos* entered—”

“But the chief  
Are poets, *eloquent men*, who dwell on earth.”

Armstrong has given us some examples of a similar license in versification. Cowper’s “Task” abounds with them, and they may be frequently found in the blank verse of some of our latest poets.

In accompanying me in the little retrospect which I have taken of the usage of our poets who have written in blank verse, I think the reader must be convinced that there is something not incompatible with the principles of English versification, nor displeasing to an unperturbed taste, in a practice that, in spite of rules and prejudices, is continually showing itself in the works of most of our sweetest and most valued poets, which prevailed in the best age of English poetry, and has now returned to us endeared by its associations with that venerable period. I will not here multiply examples to show how much it may sometimes improve the beauty of the numbers. I will only refer the reader to those already laid before him. I do not believe that he would be contented to exchange any of the words marked in the quotations which I have made for tame iambics, could it ever be done by the use of phrases equally proper and expressive. For my part, when I meet with such passages, amid a dead waste of dissyllabic



feet, their spirited irregularity refreshes and relieves me, like the sight of eminences and forests breaking the uniformity of a landscape.

If pure trisyllabic feet are allowed in blank verse, it would seem difficult to give any good reason why they should not be employed in rhyme. If they have any beauty in blank verse, they cannot lose it merely because the ends of the lines happen to coincide in sound. The distinction between prose and verse is more strongly marked in rhymes than in blank verse, and the former, therefore, stands less in need than the latter of extreme regularity of quantity to make the distinction more obvious. Besides, the restraint which rhyme imposes on the diction is a good reason why it should be freed from any embarrassments which cannot contribute to its excellence. But, whatever may be the reasons for admitting trisyllabic feet into iambic rhyme, it is certain that most of our rhyming poets, from the time of Dryden, have carefully excluded them.

Spenser's verse is harmonious, but its harmony is of a peculiar kind. It is a long-drawn, diffuse, redundant volume of music, sometimes, indeed, sinking into languor, but generally filling the ear agreeably. This peculiar dialect has been called the Doric of the English language. I would rather call it the Ionic. It delights in adding vowels and resolving contractions, and, instead of shortening two syllables into one, it often dilates one syllable into two. It is not in Spenser, therefore, that we are to look for frequent examples of pure trisyllabic feet in iambic verse. They have an air of compression not well suited to the loose and liquid flow of his numbers. Yet he has occasionally admitted them, and without any apparent apprehension that he was sinning against propriety, for by a little variation of phrase he might have avoided them. In turning over his "*Faerie Queene*," I meet, without any very laborious search, the following instances :

"Unweeting of the *perſloſs* wāndering ways."

"The sight whereof so *thoroſghly* hīm dismayed."

"That still it breathed forth sweet *spirit* *and* wholesome smell."  
 "When oblique Saturn sate *in the house* of agonies."

That Milton did not think the use of these feet in rhyme incompatible with correct versification, is evident from the following passages in his "Lycidas"—no unworthy or hasty effort of his genius:

"Fame is the spur that the clear *spirit* *dōth* *rāise*,  
 Oh, fountain *Arethūsā*! *And* thou honored flood,  
 Smooth-sliding Mincius—"  
 "To all that wander in that *perilōūs* *flood*."

Cowley employed pure trisyllabic feet in iambics without scruple. Waller and Denham sometimes admitted them, but Dryden and his successors rigidly excluded them; or, when in too great haste to do this, disguised them by some barbarous and almost unpronounceable elision. Pope, in one of his earlier poems, has an instance of this sort:

"The courtier's learning, policy o' th' gown."

Who at this day would attempt to pronounce this line as it is written? I have observed some instances of pure trisyllabic feet in Garth's "Dispensary"; and a few even occur, at remote distances, to break the detestable monotony of Darwin's iambics.

Some of our latest modern poets in rhyme, as I have already said, have restored the old practice with a good effect. Take an example from Moore's "Veiled Prophet," which I have praised:

"Alone Mokanna, midst the general flight,  
 Stands, like the red moon in some stormy night,  
 Among the *fugitive* clouds, that, hurrying by,  
 Leave only her unshaken in the sky."

Here the anapest in the third line quickens the numbers, and gives additional liveliness to the image which we receive of the rapid flight of the clouds over the face of heaven.

The liberty for which I have been contending has often been censured and ridiculed; the utmost favor which it has at any time, to my knowledge, received from the critics, is to have been silently allowed, but no one has openly defended it; and, in doing so now, my aim has not been to mark its limits or to look for its rules, but simply to attempt to show that it is an ancient birthright of the poets which ought not to be given up.

## NOSTRADAMUS'S PROVENÇAL POETS.\*

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IF this work has never been reviewed till the present moment, neither the author, nor his friends, nor the literati, have been to blame, for it was published long before the age of reviews or even of gazettes. When the author wrote, therefore, he must have written without the fear of criticism before his eyes. He could not expect that his work would be made the subject of an elaborate article in the ponderous literary journal, or even of a slighter notice in the newspaper. There was no class of writers in those days whose function it was to call up the author before them, in the presence of the public, as a school-master summons his pupil, with his exercise in hand, to praise him moderately for what he had done, chide him soundly for what he had omitted to do, and read him a long and minute lecture on the faults and mistakes he had committed. There was no one to reprehend his arrangement, his orthography, or his diction; nobody to show him how careless he must have been when, in his quotations from a Provençal poet, he spells the same word *tousiours* in one place and *toiour* in another in the same paper, and when he calls himself Jehan de Nostre Dame in the title-page and Jean de Nostradamus in the dedication; nor to point out that un-

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\* "Vies des plus célèbres et anciens poètes provençaux qui ont floury du temps des Comtes de Provence." Par Jehan de Nostre Dame, Procureur en la cour de Parlement de Provence. A. Lyon, pour Alexandre Marselij. MDLXXV.—("New York Review," 1825.)

lucky sentence in which it is said of one of the troubadours that he "was in love with a noble lady, to the praise of whom he made many songs, and soon afterward died"—when the reader is left to suppose that the poet is dead, and that his biography is at an end; but, on reading a little further, finds that the lady is dead, instead of the poet, who is not only in full life, but actually writing verses with all his might. In short, the work of Nostradamus may well be called, in the words of Sismondi, "destitute of all criticism" (*dépourvu de tout critique*) in more senses than one; for it contains not only no criticism, but it was never made the subject of any; even the lowest of those honors which our journals bestow was never conferred upon it—that of being mentioned in the monthly or quarterly lists of new publications, or of being more pompously announced in the booksellers' advertisements. The *lettered post* alone, the immense column before the bookseller's shop, plastered with the names of all the works sold within, informed the passing traveller, who was indolent enough to stop and examine it, that a new book had been given to the world.

But, if there were some inconveniences to the author and his book in this state of things, there were also some advantages. If he could not expect that an ingenious literary friend should lift it into public favor by a cunning exposition of its latent merits, and an artful selection of fortunate passages, so neither could he apprehend that any ill-natured critic should injure its circulation by caricaturing its defects and making a bouquet of its absurdities and mistakes. Still less could he fear the machinations of any of those dexterous gentlemen who, under color of reviewing a work, grow exceedingly learned by the aid of its contents, and ruin its sale entirely by giving them to the public in a more concise and popular form.

On the whole, those were happy times for the author of weak nerves or of doubtful merit. The troublesome race of pamphleteers who preceded the reviewers—and of whom the Grub Street writers, in the reign of Queen Anne, are perhaps



the most perfect specimens—had not then appeared ; they were the spawn of a later age and the plague of a mere book-making generation. Nor did they pester any but the great, and those who had reputation enough to give notoriety and importance to the attacks made upon them ; they were bull-dogs who fastened only on the largest and fattest of the herd. In the days of John of Nostradamus the world must have been a sort of elysium to the new author—the very fairyland of compliment. A thousand ill-natured things are said of a book that never come to the writer's ears ; but not one is printed which he does not read—and read, too, let him pretend what he will, with some degree of emotion. In an age when criticism was not wont to deliver its oracles through the medium of the press, her voice must have been incredibly softened when it addressed the author himself. The many civil things that well-bred people would say to him about his book ; the letters of his friends, predisposed to regard it with a favorable judgment ; and the smiles of the exalted personage to whom he had been permitted to dedicate it—would naturally seem to him the indications of public opinion, and fill his mind with a most delightful self-complacency. A very silly book might then be published, laughed at, and forgotten, while the author was all the while fancying himself a great benefactor to the world for having produced it. Even if he should be sensible of its passage to oblivion, he would, at least, have the melancholy satisfaction of thinking it died a natural death, instead of seeing, as he must do at the present day, with all the agony of a parent at the destruction of its offspring, a crew of grim-looking, hard-hearted ruffians pouncing upon the sickly infant as soon as it is born, imbruing their hands in its thin blood, and fairly murdering the poor thing in its swaddling clothes. Although the book should have been generally and decidedly condemned, he must have suffered much less from the expression of the public disapprobation than he would now do. What Chaucer calls the posterior trumpet of fame would then have been sounded at a distance, and almost out of his hear-

ing; at the present day it is the fashion to blow it in one's very ears.

If John of Nostradamus, the writer of this little book, has been thus fortunate in his lifetime, and for so many years after his death, it seems to us that the world is absolved from the obligation of all further forbearance, and we have therefore taken the liberty to make his work the subject of the present article. That he has even escaped so long is owing, probably, to the great rarity of the book, the copies of which are extremely scarce. Nothing comes amiss to the thoroughbred reviewer, whatever may be its antiquity. He is an anatomist who will turn from dissecting a carcass warm from the gallows to cut up a mummy from the catacombs of Egypt. Witness the great writers of former times, particularly those of foreign languages, whose repose, within a few years, has been troubled in this way with very little ceremony. We speak not now of the retrospective reviews, which drive a regular trade in the exhumation of buried literature, but of journals professedly devoted to the consideration of modern works. The fathers of German literature have been called from their tombs to furnish matter for many an article in the reviews. Petrarch, and Ariosto, and Tasso, with his venerable translator Fairfax, have been dragged from their slumbers to be made the subject of critical discussion along with the writers of the day. The great Dante has not been suffered to sleep in his awful sepulchre; and shall the grave and the lapse of two hundred and fifty years protect John of Nostradamus, the humble procurator at the Parliament of Provence, the laborious compiler of the biographies of greater men than himself?

The writer of this book was one who employed the intervals of a laborious profession in studying the old poets of his country, and in collecting the particulars of their lives from the Provençal biographers and putting them into barbarous French, for the edification of the Queen of France, to whom his work was dedicated, as well as of all others who might not understand the Provençal language. This language, ac-

according to his own account, had, in 1575, the time this book was published, degenerated into a sort of *patois*, the obscure, unwritten dialect of a province abandoned to the illiterate. It would appear, however, that some of its original beauty and purity was to be observed in the metrical compositions current in the mouths of the people, for the author says in his preface: "In the church of St. Saviour, at Aix, and throughout all the diocese thereto appertaining, they sing, on the feast and day of Stephen the Martyr, a hymn in our Provençal language. And in what choice expression and beautiful rhythm are composed the seven penitential psalms sung by those who go begging alms from door to door, than which no finer verses were ever made!"

We are told by Moreri, in his "Historical Dictionary," that this John of Nostradamus for a period of many years exercised the profession of *procureur*, or attorney, at the Parliament of Provence, with great diligence and reputation. The following eulogium of the Provençal laws is therefore entitled to some credit, as coming from one who was well acquainted with the subject, though we cannot be certain that some deductions are not to be made from it on the score of professional prejudice: "But in what perspicuous and beautiful language are written the statutes of Provence, in our Provençal tongue, which are the laws and customs of the country! wherein also are comprised the requests and demands which the general assemblies of the three estates made to the counts of Provence, and to the kings of Naples and of Sicily, with the answers returned by their majesties."

If this praise be rightly bestowed, the days of Nostradamus were the golden age of the law—of its subjects we mean, not of its professors—for we suspect that the gains of the latter are somewhat increased by the prolixity and obscurity of statutes. What a pity the conquest of England, in 1066, was not a Provençal instead of a Norman conquest, that we might have inherited this beautiful and intelligible body of laws! How unfortunate that a copy of these exceedingly perspicuous ordi-

nances had not been preserved to serve as a model for the legislators of England and America! If no other good consequence had followed, it would at least have been a delightful recreation to look over a collection of statutes whose meaning, like that of any other compositions, we could comprehend as we read—or, at most, after one or two perusals—instead of being obliged to hunt the sense, through pages of verbiage, and a thousand doublings of expression, in danger every moment of being lost in the maze of words and sent back to begin the pursuit anew, and, perhaps, after all our labor, to remain uncertain of the true construction.

The book of Nostradamus, though exceedingly meagre and imperfect in most of its details, is the source from which nearly all the knowledge we have of the history of the troubadours is drawn.\* Sismondi, in his history of the literature of the south of Europe, and other authors who have written of the Provençal poets, have made a liberal use of its materials. It contains the biographies of about eighty writers who flourished between the middle of the twelfth century and the year 1382. This period begins at the time when Raymond Beranger, Count of Barcelona and Provence, espoused Rixenda, or Richilda, Queen of Spain, and extends to the end of the reign of Joanna I, Queen of Naples and Sicily, and Countess of Provence. This was the most flourishing period—indeed, it was nearly the whole duration of Provençal literature. Toward the middle of the fourteenth century, René, King of Naples and Count of Provence, made an attempt to revive it; but the race of the troubadours was extinct, and the invasions of the English, which desolated France, left her inhabitants little leisure or disposition for the cultivation of letters. It lingered a little later in Toulouse, and its last steps were in Catalonia about the beginning of the fifteenth century.

It is, however, an exceedingly interesting and curious pic-

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\* It has been shown by more modern researchers to be full of errors and misstatements, and is now superseded.—ED.



ture, notwithstanding the looseness of its outlines, and its utter want of fulness and exactness, that this little book gives us of the age of the troubadours. It would seem as if there was, in the literature of Provence, a presentiment of its early decline, and as if it hastened to make amends by its sudden luxuriance for the shortness of its duration. The very air of that country breathed the infection of poetry. Illustrious and learned strangers visited the courts of its princes and nobles, and went away poets. Grave jurisconsults opened their mouths in verse; gloomy astrologers, laborious mathematicians, and fierce warriors addressed songs to high-born and beautiful ladies. Probably in no age of the world were men of letters so highly honored or so liberally rewarded as those who then cultivated the vernacular literature of Provence. The history of the troubadours is the history of riches amassed and distinctions gained by the successful exercise of their art. It is a circumstance not a little remarkable that this munificence of patronage and encouragement, which is ordinarily the fruit of a very advanced stage of civilization and refinement, should have existed at a period when Europe was just emerging from the darkness of the middle ages, and that its objects should have been those who cultivated the earliest among the modern dialects which assumed anything like the form of a regular language. In speaking of the poets of that age, our author says: "The greater number of them were men of gentle blood, or lords of castles, in love with queens, duchesses, marchionesses, countesses, and other princesses and gentlewomen, whose husbands esteemed themselves exceedingly fortunate when our poets addressed to them some new song in our Provençal tongue. The most honorable recompense which they could make the said poets was to furnish them with clothing, horses, armor, and money, which they did with great liberality; for which reason the authors often attributed their poems to their Mæcenases, and to those who bestowed on them honors and favors."

The love which the poets cherished toward these illustrious



ladies was generally, if we may believe Nostradamus, of a Platonic nature. It was a sort of poetical worship, which clothed the breathings of earthly passion in the terms and ideas appropriated to devotion. It was not unusual for the poet to address to his patroness strains secretly intended for some fair one of greater charms, but less splendid title, the real object of his affections. The lady, however, was always flattered by being made the subject of his songs, and the poet was always rewarded. Even when his homage was unwelcome or inconvenient, as when it alarmed the jealousy of a husband, or provoked the malicious interpretation of the envious and ill-natured, the poet was not the less well paid for it. The lady, in such cases, sent him a munificent present of horses, arms, and money, and prayed him "*de se déporter de cet amour*," or, in plain English, to make love elsewhere, a mandate which the complying troubadour, who was generally well satisfied with the consideration, implicitly obeyed, and withdrew to make his fortune at some other court. Many of the ladies themselves became troubadours; and among the most extraordinary institutions of that or any other age were the courts of love which they established for the decision of questions relating to a subject always exceedingly interesting to the sex, but which in that age seems to have interwoven itself with all their thoughts, and to have become the sole business of their lives. Of these, Nostradamus gives the following account: "The *tençons* were disputes of love between the knights or the ladies who composed in rhyme, communing together concerning some delicate and subtle question of love; and when they could not agree they sent to have them decided by the illustrious lady-presidents, who held open and full court of love at Signé, and at Pierrefeu, and at other places, who thereupon made decrees, which were called *Lous Arrêts d'amour*—the decrees of love.

From Provence the spirit of poetical emulation went abroad into other countries. The sovereigns of Europe not only received the troubadours at their courts with great favor and

distinction, but became troubadours themselves, and composed verses in the Provençal language. Among these royal poets we find the names of Frederick II, Emperor of Germany, and of Richard Cœur de Lion. Even the poets of Italy—of that Italy which boasts at the present day the sweetest and most harmonious of modern languages—were in that age troubadours, and wrote in the Provençal dialect, their own being considered as too barbarous and unsettled for the purposes of literature.

But it was not in verse alone that the troubadours wrote, nor were their subjects always love and war. They composed books on all the sciences and topics of knowledge with which Christendom was then acquainted. They were the authors of numerous histories of the wars and other transactions of their age. They also wrote works upon mathematics—a science which in that age was confounded with astrology—books on natural history, treatises upon morals and law, and theological tracts. Among these latter was one against the errors of the Arians—*contra l'erreur dels Arians*—written by Peyre Raymond lou Pronx. It is impossible to know of how many keen and effectual weapons of controversy the combatants on both sides of the question have been deprived by the loss of this work.

The *sirvente* was a species of poetical composition which one would suppose was invented on purpose to relax the overstrained imaginations of the troubadours after their extravagant and far-sought panegyrics of the ladies. It was a sort of satirical poem, in which the author abandoned himself to the utmost bitterness of invective. It was generally levelled against the pride, cruelty, and oppression of the princes and nobles of Europe. No rank or degree was safe against these attacks; lords, dukes, emperors, bishops, cardinals, the Pope himself, were denounced in terms of the boldest and most unmingled censure. The Provençal was then the language of all the European courts, and, wherever the songs of the troubadours were sung, their *sirventes* also obtained cur-

rency. The very scandal they contained would make them sought after with greater avidity, as a libel is always read with more interest than a panegyric. What is extraordinary, in those times of violence and arbitrary power, the satirist, who thus boldly attacked the wearers of crowns and mitres, seems to have been even more safe than he would now be under many of the governments of Europe. From the court of his patron, whom he was, of course, expected to praise, he pointed with impunity the hand of scorn against all other princes of the continent. Along with some abuse he told them many truths; and it is always a good omen for the age when there is any means of conveying truth to the ears of the great.

The rapid decline of Provençal literature was not less extraordinary than its sudden growth. After a brilliant existence of three centuries, the smiles of the great were withdrawn from those who cultivated it; its poets, its historians, and its moralists ceased to write; other languages acquired consistence and regularity, and produced a literature of their own. The works in the Provençal language were written before the age of printing, and existed only in manuscript; they ceased to be generally read; they were gradually forgotten, and the beautiful, rich, and flexible dialect in which they were composed became one of the dead languages. Nothing, however, that had been gained in the progress of modern literature was lost. The spirit of the Provençal poetry passed into that of Italy, which followed close upon its decline. The great founders of Italian literature enriched and harmonized their language by the study of Provençal models, and they have not been slow to acknowledge their obligations to their masters. The precise extent, however, to which they were indebted to the troubadours it would be impossible to ascertain without recourse to the remains of the Provençal poets, which exist in manuscript in the great libraries of France. Nostradamus says that any one who reads Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and many other Italian poets, may see whence they

have taken "their beautiful inventions"; and in more than one place he taxes Petrarch with downright plagiarism.

Geoffrey Rudel is the first of the troubadours of whom Nostradamus gives any account. He tells a story of his adventures, almost too romantic for belief, if we did not consider the habitual extravagance of the age. It is not to be concealed from our readers that the credulity of Nostradamus sometimes renders his authority a little doubtful; as, for example, where he speaks of one of the troubadours revealing to a prince the future events of his reign, and of another's finding the philosopher's stone. He seems, however, to have been a very honest sort of man, and it is to be observed that those who complain most of his inaccuracy are those who have made the largest use of the materials furnished by his work. In the following relation he is gravely followed by Sismondi and other authors :

"Jaufred Rudel, gentleman, was lord of Blieux, in Provence, a good Provençal poet, and ready in the composition of verse. In his youth he went to the court of Agoult, lord of Sault, who received and entertained him for a great length of time. The Count Geoffrey, brother of Richard, King of England, coming to Provence on a visit to Agoult, was greatly taken with the virtues of this poet, for the many beautiful and pleasant ballads which he sung in his presence, to the praise of his master. Agoult, seeing the affection which the Count bore toward him, prayed him to retain the poet in his service, whom he received and treated with great generosity, and kept him with him a long time, composing verses to the praises of his two lords and masters. The poet having heard, by the way of certain pilgrims who came from the Holy Land, of the virtues of the Countess of Tryppoly, and of her learning, became in love with her, and made several beautiful songs in her praise. And being pricked to the heart with the desire of seeing her, he took leave of Count Geoffrey, who used every means in his power to persuade him not to undertake this peregrination, went to sea in the habit of a pilgrim, and during his voyage was attacked with a grievous malady, so that those who went in the ship, thinking him dead, were about to throw him into the sea. And in



this condition he was carried to the port of Tryppoly; and, being arrived there, his companions let the Countess know of the coming of a sick pilgrim; and the Countess, being come on board the ship, took the poet by the hand, and he, being told that it was the Countess, immediately upon this sweet and gracious reception came to himself, and thanked her that she had restored him to life, and said: 'Most illustrious and virtuous Princess, I do not now regret that I must die.' And not being able to proceed, his sickness returning and waxing more violent, he gave up the ghost in the arms of the Countess, who caused him to receive rich and honorable burial in a sepulchre of porphyry, and caused to be engraved thereon some verses in the Arabesque language. This was in the year 1162, about which time he flourished. The Countess, being greatly troubled at so sudden a death, was never cheerful afterward. His companion, named Bertrand d'Allamanon, who was canon of Sylvecane, gave her an account of the virtues of this poet, and the cause of his coming; and made her a present of all the poems and romances that he had composed in her praise, the which she caused to be written out in fair gilt letters."

The troubadours seem to have been as ingenious in raising subtle questions on any given case as are the gentlemen of another profession at the present day. It is not, therefore, to be supposed that so extraordinary an adventure as that of Geoffrey Rudel would fail of giving occasion to a poetical controversy and a decision by the ladies—justices of the *cour d'amour*. The following is a good sample of these disputes:

"The monk of the Golden Isles, in the catalogue he has compiled of the Provençal writers, maketh the mention of a dialogue between Gerard and Peyronnet, conversing together, in which is agitated a very subtle question, to wit: Whether one loveth his lady most when absent or when present? and which induceth most strongly to love, the eyes or the heart? And many good reasons and examples were adduced in the dispute, and among others the piteous history of Janfred Rudel; and it was said, in one of the stanzas, that the heart hath lordship over the eyes, and that the eyes are of no use in love unless the heart is moved; whereas, without the eyes, the heart may clearly be in love with one whom it hath never seen, as was the case



with Jaufred Rudel of Savoy. There was also mentioned the case of Andrew of France, who died of love. Finally, seeing that this question was of a most high and difficult nature, they sent to the illustrious ladies holding *cour d'amour* at Pierrefeu and at Signé (which was a public and open court, full of immortal praises, adorned with noble ladies and knights of the country), in order to have a determination of this question."

Here is certainly a tolerable array of arguments and cases in point on one side of the question; and we doubt not that it was as ingeniously argued on the other, with an equal show of reasonings and authorities. The biographer proceeds to give a list of the illustrious and titled dames who composed the court; but he has omitted to inform us of the opinion which they finally pronounced, and thus the solution of this important question is forever lost to the world.

Another troubadour, William of Agoult, seems to have been a lover of the good old school, "excellent in all knowledge and honesty, an example of a good censor, through all his life gentle and moderate, renowned, fortunate, his good fortune being always conjoined with virtue; a man of noble stature, pleasing countenance, and venerable appearance, bearing himself always with a port of uncommon dignity." He maintained in his songs "that no person ought to be deemed and taken for a true and loyal lover who had not honor in singular recommendation before his eyes; that he who is truly in love is always cheerful and of good courage, complaisant to his lady in all things, free from all guile and evil intentions, and respecting always the frailty of the sex."

Of a similar character seems to have been Arnould Daniel, with the additional advantage of being able to fall in love with whom he pleased. He abandoned the use of the Latin language, and addicted himself altogether to the vulgar Provençal dialect, on account of a gentlewoman of Provence of whom he became enamored, composing in her praise many good ballads in every sort of rhyme, which he invented, as well as sextines, songs, *sirventes*, and many other beautiful

and ingenious kinds of writing, without so much as ever naming her, either openly or in secret terms. And, not being able to succeed in his passion, he became enamored of another lady, the wife of William of Bouille, whom he named Cyberne, by a secret name ; but no one ever had a bad opinion of them, as may be seen by the tenor of all his songs, particularly one where he says "that he hears a hundred masses a day, praying, not for the empire of Rome, but that his mistress may restore him to life by a single kiss—that he is Arnaud, who embraces the wind, and chases a hare with a lame ox for a greyhound."

One of the strangest stories contained in this book is that of the loves of William Adhemar and the Countess of Die, which is altogether inexplicable upon any theory of the tender passion in vogue at the present day. They were both troubadours, desperately enamored of each other, and had written verses in each other's praise. Those of the Countess of Die were full of boasts of the beauty and bravery of the gallant knight to whom she had given her heart, of his noble extraction, unspotted honor, and dexterity in the use of arms. These verses Adhemar constantly carried about his person, and often sung stanzas of them in the company of knights and ladies. With all this encouragement, however, and these assurances that his affection was reciprocated, he contrived to fall ill from the violence of his passion. The Countess visited him on his death-bed ; he kissed her hand, of course, and expired. The mother of the Countess erected a splendid mausoleum to his memory, on which was engraved the story of his feats of arms ; and the Countess herself became a nun in the convent of St. Honorius of Tharascon, and died of grief.

This is a ridiculous story enough ; that of Fouquet of Marseilles is more probable. Fouquet, the son of a rich Genoese merchant, being somewhat distinguished by his courage and his talent for Provençal poetry, was retained at the court of Beral des Baulx, lord of Marseilles, and loaded with favors. The return he made for this kindness was an at-

tempt to corrupt the wife of his friend and patron, in which, however, he did not succeed. On the death of Beral and his lady, he retired to a monastery of the Cistercian order, was chosen Abbé of Thorondet in Provence, then Bishop of Marseilles, and finally Archbishop of Toulouse. In this last station he became exceedingly furious against heretics, headed in person the war of extermination against the Albigenses, about the year 1198, and committed murders and robberies innumerable.

Anselme Faydit was of a more cheerful disposition, and, provided he was well satisfied with the quantity and quality of his viands, troubled himself very little about controverted points in theology. "He sung in the very best manner, was a good Provençal poet, and composed exceedingly well both the words and the tunes of his ballads. He was one who always made good cheer, living without care for the future, by reason whereof he lost all his substance at dice. He then became a noted comic poet, selling his comedies and tragedies for three or four thousand livres each, and sometimes more, according to the invention, whereby he gained large sums of money. He was so liberal, lavish, and gluttonous in his eating and drinking that he squandered all that he gained by his poetry, and became fat beyond measure. He was at one time in great misery and poverty, not receiving gifts from any person until Richard, King of England, took him into his service, with whom he remained till his death, in 1189, receiving many fair and rich presents. He married Guilhamone, of Soliers, a lady of a noble Provençal family, whom he had enticed by fair speeches from a convent of nuns in Provence, and carried about with him to the courts of princes. She was beautiful, learned, and well instructed in all excellent accomplishments, and sung exceedingly well the songs that her Anselme made. But, on account of the dissolute life they led together, she became as fat as he, and, being overtaken with sickness, died." Anselme, however, does not seem to have been inconsolable for the death of his wife. He wandered from the court

of one prince to that of another, everywhere received with caresses, and loaded with presents, eating and drinking to his heart's content, jesting, laughing, and singing, and selling his tragedies and comedies, which, by the way, were only a kind of ballads, and died at length in a ripe and corpulent old age.

While Anselme was thus squandering the gifts of his patrons, Arnaud de Marveil was heaping together his receipts. He was a gentleman of a decayed family in Provence, who, on receiving his education, went to the court of Roger II, Viscount of Beziers, where he became enamored of the Countess, composed verses in her praise and sung them in her presence, but, from a feeling of modesty, attributed their composition to others. His passion for the Countess seems to have been platonic enough as respected her person, but less refined and spiritual as respected her goods and chattels. He soon saw that he was not likely to make his fortune as a singer of other men's ballads, and, "being constrained by his passion," as Nostradamus expresses it, he avowed himself an original poet, and came out with a flaming sonnet, addressed to the Countess, in which he implores her to listen to his virtuous addresses and compassionately grant his just demands: "This sonnet had so much virtue and efficacy with the Countess that, no longer rejecting the chaste prayers of Arnaud, she condescended and listened to them graciously; wherefore she furnished him with clothes and arms and horses, and held his poems at a high price and value."

Rambaud de Vagreiras was not so succesful with his mistress. She gave him a little encouragement at first, but afterward withdrew it entirely, "wherefore Rambaud, moved with poetic fury, made a poem in diverse languages—to correspond with his unhappy case—saying therein that in like manner as he had changed her opinion of him, so he had changed languages. The first stanza was written in Provençal, the second in Tuscan dialect, the third in French, the fourth in Gascon, the fifth in Spanish, and the final stanza in the said five



languages mingled together." Rambaud survived this paroxysm of poetic fury, and afterward accompanied Boniface III, Marquis of Montferrat, in the fourth crusade against the infidels. The poet signalized himself on this occasion by acts of the most heroic valor, was made a knight, and received an important post in the government of Thessalonica.

Pierre Vidal, or Peyre Vidal, according to the Provençal orthography, has been called the maddest lover and the wisest poet among all the troubadours. "He was a good and sovereign musician, a delectable poet in the Provençal language, and the most ready to invent and compose that had been known for a long time. He was a great boaster; everything which he saw which pleased him he thought and called his own; he sung enormous and incredible follies of love and of arms, and spoke evil of everybody. He went to the court of René, Prince of Marseilles, a patron of the Provençal poets, who took him with him to the Holy Land in 1227, where he became enamored of a beautiful Greek lady, and married her. And they made him believe that she was niece of the Emperor of Constantinople, and, by reason thereof, all the empire of the East belonged to him. And he, giving credit to all this, applied all the gold and silver that he gained by his poetry to the building of ships to go to the conquest of his vain empire, and changed the imperial arms, gules, to a trident of gold, giving himself the title of emperor, and his wife that of empress. He was in love with all the ladies he saw, made love to them all, and offered his services to them all. He had such an opinion of himself that he was not ashamed to lay his commands on them, as their lord and master, and believed they were all dying to have him for their lover, and that he was the most renowned knight in the world and the most beloved of the ladies. In one of his songs he boasts that neither snow, nor rain, nor dark tempests shall hinder him from executing his high and glorious enterprises; and he compares himself to Gawain, in that all which he takes or touches he breaks and grinds to powder, and adds that he has only to go

to the conquest of his empire to make the whole world tremble."

The poems of Pierre Vidal have been praised for the beauty of the sentiment and the numerousness of the verse. The following is his personification of that passion which divided the hearts of the troubadours with the thirst for military glory. The Love of Pierre Vidal is not Love the baby—such as he was represented in the pastoral age, and by those who prattle of his power and his emblems at the present day, wearing the wings of a bird at his shoulders, and carrying a bow, the weapon of the earliest times, in his hands. It is Love grown up—the gallant and graceful knight—such as he was wont to bow in the courts of princes, and combat in the presence of bright eyes at the tournament.\*

The sketch given by Nostradamus of the life of William Durant is not a little edifying, inasmuch, in the first place, as it shows that one may be a tolerable poet and yet an excellent lawyer; and, in the second place, as it preserves a very sound maxim of a very wise man. "He was the greatest jurisconsult of his time, and more famous than any one who has written after him, as well in the theory as in the practice of the law, on account of his knowledge, in which some have called him the speculator, and others the father of practice. In his youth he applied himself to the reading of the best books that could be found, and lived in a continual sobriety of life, which was a means of singular efficacy toward the strengthening of his memory. And every one was in admiration of the goodness of his memory; for when he had read any delectable book in the Provençal, whether it were prose or rhyme, he was able to recite it immediately, word for word. He held that gluttony and drunkenness stupefied the understanding, and altogether offuscated and darkened the recollection. He made many beautiful poems in praise of a lady of the house of Balbs, in the Provençal language, in which he was

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\* See the poem on page 112 *post.*

well versed ; and an excellent poet, Saint Cesary, saith that he often used this sentence in the advice he gave to pleaders in the courts when he knew that their cause was weak :

*'Mais val calar,  
Que fol parlar,'*

which, being interpreted, signifies that it is better to be silent than to talk idly."

William Durant was not the only troubadour who was a lawyer. Laufranc Sygalle was also of the long robe, "a wise and prudent man, a good orator and counsellor, a sergeant at law, making an occupation and profession of the laws and of alms." Boniface of Castellane followed different maxims from those of the grave and severe William Durant. Durant derived his inspiration from continued sobriety, Boniface from the bottle. "It was a wonder to see him when he had well drunken; he was agitated with an incredible poetic fury, writing or declaiming poetry with all the madness of a prophet, sparing no person, of what degree soever he might be. And in the final couplet of the most part of his songs it was his wont to put these words: '*Bouka qu'as tu diah?*—Mouth, what hast thou said'—as if he almost repented that he had said so much, knowing well that his tongue, although he said the truth, might one day work him hurt."

It does not appear, after all, that Boniface, in the bitterness and severity of his satires, exceeds Sordel of Mantua, a troubadour, of whom Nostradamus says "that he surpassed in Provençal verse all the other Genoese and Tuscan poets, who, for the sweetness of our Provençal language, delighted therein more than in their mother tongue." Sordel was taken into the service of Raymond Beranger V, Count of Provence, when only fifteen years old. Even at that early age his talent for Provençal poetry gave promise of the high excellence which he afterward attained. There he addicted himself to all the studies of the age, and excelled in them all. He disdained to waste, like the common herd of troubadours, his talent upon the trite and trivial topic of love, but chose subjects of morals

and philosophy, and in his verses boldly reprehended the vices of the great. On the death of a distinguished Provençal gentleman of the name of Blachas, or Blacas, he took occasion to compose a satire on the princes of Europe in the form of a lamentation over the dead :

“ I mourn for my Lord Blachas, I weep that he is dead,  
That the noblest, bravest spirit of this coward age is fled :  
We cannot call it back, but will keep his generous heart,  
And the craven lords of Europe shall each receive a part.  
Let the Emperor partake, if he would triumph o’er  
The Pope and the Milanese, whose armies press him sore,  
And give the King of France, that youthful king, his share,  
That he may get Castile again—the gem he used to wear.  
But since, within the council, another rules than he,  
Let him take especial care his mother does not see.  
Give largely to the English king, and he may think, perchance,  
Of winning back the fair, broad lands that he has lost in France.  
The monarch of Castile—let him take enough for two,  
For to keep the remnant of his realm is what he scarce can do ;  
But secretly and slyly let him receive his share,  
Lest Portugal should come in wrath and pull his royal hair.  
Let him of Arragon partake as largely as he will,  
That he may clear from foul disgrace his courage and his skill.  
When leading all his hosts, he came, with furious heat,  
To seize Marseilles and storm Milan, and shamefully was beat.  
Give freely to Navarre, that lily-livered thing,  
Who was a tolerable count, but makes a sorry king.  
And to the Count of Toulouse—that he may see at length  
How warlike hands have lopped his realm and hewn away his strength :  
How at the very sacred hour, when tolled the vesper-bell,  
By thousands, in the bloody streets, the sons of Provence fell.”

Bertrand d’Allamanon wrote a *sirvente* against the Archbishop of Arles, in which he denounced him as “a perverse and corrupt man, who believed neither in God nor the holy Scriptures, who had grown rich by means of false witnesses, a perjured villain, and a disturber of society, who deserved to



be burnt or buried alive." Luco of Grimaud was still more hardy, for he scrupled not to attack the head of the Church himself: "He wrote many comic pieces, full of curses against Pope Boniface VIII, for which he was severely rebuked by the magistrates, so that he was constrained to put them into the fire in their presence and burn them. But being moved with a just and laudable fury, which often happeneth to poets, and having retained them all in his memory, he wrote them out again, amplifying and enriching them with new taunts against his holiness, and made a present thereof to De Gambateza, lieutenant of the King in Provence."

The history of Richard Cœur de Lion is thus briefly despatched by Nostradamus: "He was the son of Henry, King of England, and was elected Emperor of the Romans. In his youth, frequenting the court of Raymond Beranger, Count of Provence, last of the name, he was surprised with the love of Leonora, or Eleanor, one of the four daughters of the Count, whom afterward he married. While there, he often heard the Provençal poets, who were in the train of the Count of Provence, recite many beautiful ballads, which they sung in their mother Provençal tongue, wherein Richard took great pleasure. And, on account of the sweetness of that language, he amused himself in composing verses in it, and delighted in the reading of the beautiful poems written therein. Some years afterward he went beyond sea to the conquest of the Holy Land with St. Louis, King of France, and other princes. On his return he was made prisoner; and during his captivity he composed many songs, which he addressed to Beatrice, Countess and heir of Provence, sister of the said Eleanor, complaining that his barons and gentlemen left him so long in captivity without paying his ransom, saying, in the second stanza of one of them:

"Yet, be my liege-men and my barons told  
That there is no companion of my train  
So low, so poor, that for the love of gold  
I'd let him lie unransomed in his chain.

I tax them not with wrong, but twice the year  
Has come, and found me still a prisoner here.' ”

Another troubadour of illustrious rank was the Count of Poitiers, a powerful nobleman, who flourished in the beginning of the fourteenth century, and not only wrote very tolerable poetry himself, but filled all the offices of his court with poets. Nostradamus gives some account of eleven of these, but mentions no particulars of importance. Of one of them, Pystoueta by name, he preserves only the following conceit :

“ Most cruel lady, yet most fair !  
I would I had a Syrian dove,  
Like that of Mahomet, to bear  
My hourly messages of love :  
Then should'st thou hear of ceaseless sighs,  
Of nights in wakeful anguish past,  
Of secret tears that stain my eyes,  
And thou should'st pity me at last.”

In the mean time, William of Amalrics, another troubadour at the court of the Count, was exemplifying the advantage which the practical man has over the mere man of theory and speculation. Instead of wishing for the pigeon of Mahomet—a wish that, of course, could not be realized—he contented himself with employing a young damsel of the name of Arondelle to carry messages to his mistress, “who awakened her every morning and would not let her sleep.” Notwithstanding this diligence in his assiduities toward the lady of his heart, and the continual composition of verses in her praise, he found time, as we are told by Nostradamus, to address a love song to the pretty Arondelle herself, and even to indite several on spiritual subjects.

The rewards which the troubadours received for the occasional exhibition of their talent often throw curious light upon the manners of the age. Peter of Auvergne was in the habit of exacting and receiving, as the price of his recitations, a kiss

from the fairest lady in the company. Bertrand de Pezars and his wife, both troubadours, having recited several poems, full of agreeable flatteries, in the presence of Joàнна, Queen of Naples, and Louis of Tarento, her husband, the King gave the poet one of his beautiful silk mantles, and the Queen presented his wife with one of her petticoats of crimson velvet. Peter of Ruer was driven to an odd expedient to provide himself with coin. "After having loved his mistress a long time, without being able to obtain audience of her, because he lacked both money and horses, he borrowed the habit of a pilgrim, which the people of that day had in great veneration, by reason of the sanctity that was therein, and came, during holy week, when all the world was at their devotions, to a castle near Aix, in Provence, named Mount St. Reparade. And having spoken to thè curate and vicar of the church there, and shown them certain papers folded in his hand, which he said contained a permission from the bishop, he went into the pulpit on Good Friday, for want of a better preacher and explainer of the Word of God, and began to say some little prayers for the dead. And then, with a bold front and an unabashed countenance, he sang this song of love, for other things he knew not:

"Alas ! to preach or pray avails me not,  
Nor flower of Eglantine, nor linnet's lay,  
Nor gladness on the softening breezes brought,  
When God restores to earth the gentle May—  
When the gay fields in early green are clad,  
And even the unfenced wilderness is glad.

"Ah ! little these avail ; my vacant eyes  
Wander on scenes that bring me no delight,  
For deep within my aching bosom lies  
A sorrow that consumes it day and night.  
Full gladly would I change this cureless pain  
For the dark dungeon and the clanking chain.'

" And, having finished his song, he went on with some exhortation to the people, who, being greatly moved, wept and sighed bitterly, thinking that what they had heard was a prayer to the Virgin Mary, or some other saint. And then he sung the seven penitential psalms in rhyme, with which they were greatly delighted, and, having given them his benediction, he came down from the pulpit with a downcast countenance, and, all in rags as he was, placed himself at the gate of the church to ask alms. Before going thence, his hat was full of money. And this being done, he returned, well clad, according to the fashion of those times, to his lady at Aix, who, seeing him so handsomely apparelled, received him with great favor."

This Peter of Ruer seems to have been a kind of mocker; but Bernard of Rascas, a contemporary, had more respect for the religion of his country. The death of a beautiful girl whom he loved weaned him from the vanities of the world in early youth. He first applied himself to the profession of law, in which he became eminent, and for some years was a judge at Marseilles, distinguished alike for his sagacity and equity. The prevailing inclination of his mind, however, was to religious speculations, in which he became even more celebrated than in his profession. He resigned his office, and withdrew to the court of the Pope at Avignon, where he "passed his life among learned and holy men, single, chaste, and hating the estate of marriage." Here he built and richly endowed a magnificent hospital "for the poor of Jesus Christ." In the following lines, given by Nostradamus as a specimen of his poetry, the reader will perceive an uncommon greatness and sublimity of thought:

" Touta kausa mortala una fes perirá,  
 Fors que l'amour de Dieu, que tousiours durará.  
 Tous nostres cors vendran essuchs, coma fa l'eska,  
 Lous Aubres leyssaran lour verdour tendra e fresca,  
 Lous Ausselets del bosc perdran lour kant subtyeu,  
 E non s'auzira plus lou Rossignol gentyeu.



Lous Buols al Pastourgage, e las blankas fedettas  
 Sent'ran lous agulhons de las mortals Sagéttas,  
 Lous crestas d'Arles fiers, Renards, e Loups espars  
 Kabrols, Cervys, Chamous, Senglars de toutes pars,  
 Lous Ours hardys e forts, seran poudra, e Arena,  
 Lou Daulphin en la Mar, lou Ton, e la Balena,  
 Monstres impetuous, Ryaumes, e Comtas,  
 Lous Princes, e lous Reys, seran per mort domtas.  
 E nota ben eyssó káscun : la Terra granda,  
 (Ou l'Escritura ment) lou fermament que branda,  
 Prendra outra figura. Enfin tout perirá,  
 Fors que l'Amour de Dieu, que touiour durará." \*

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\* For a translation of these lines see p. 113, *post.* Though Nostradamus has been shown by late researches to have known little of the Troubadours, and nothing at all of the Trouvères, the *naïveté* of his reports lends them a certain interest still. What a vast world of poetry has since been laid open by French scholars and others, in regard to the Trouvères, the reader will discover on consulting "Les Epopées Françaises," par Léon Gauthier. Paris : Palmé, 1867-'68.

## MORISCAN ROMANCES.\*

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THE national ballads of Spain, entitled "Romances," are perhaps the most interesting part of its literature, and not the least curious among them are those which pass under the name of *Romances Moriscos*, or "Moriscan Romances." They are very ancient, having been mostly composed in the fourteenth century, but they bear no date or name of their authors. They relate the loves and chivalric deeds of the knights of Granada, and were probably, many of them, written by the Moors themselves, who at that period lived, intermingled with Christians, in the villages which had submitted to the Castilian dominions. However this may be, it is certain that the ancient songs in which Moslem heroism and Moslem beauty are celebrated form an important part of the national literature of the most intolerant of all Christian countries. These poems are simple, spirited, and tender, and full of a sweet, natural melody.

But, to enjoy them as you ought, you should hear them sung by a Spanish maiden, under a Spanish sky. You should hear them, as I have done—though rarely, I confess, for the people of Spain have almost forgotten them in their late revolution—you should hear them from the small windows of one of those *casas morunas*, as they are called—those solid dwellings built centuries ago by Moorish architects, the floors of which, having settled below the level of the surrounding earth,

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\* From "The Talisman" of 1829.

give proof of their antiquity. You should hear them from the lips of one of the girls of Andalusia, whose cheeks seem to glow with the warmth of even a hotter sky than that of Spain, whose delicate hands and prettily turned ankles might serve for those of Mahometan houries, who speak their language with a sort of Oriental accent, and whose full, black eyes seem to shoot forth revelations of the depth and mystery of Eastern feeling. It is among the footsteps of Arabian beauty that you should listen to the last echoes of Arabian minstrelsy on the shores of western Europe.

I remember that one afternoon I was returning from a solitary excursion along the skirts of the Sierra Morena. I had arrived nearly at the foot of the mountain, following a stream which found its way among rocks of the most capricious forms, leaping over their bases in a series of cascades, and wetting the lower branches of the thorn-trees and wild olives that stooped over it. Finally it issued forth into the open meadows between two obelisks of rocks forming a kind of fantastic gateway that straitened the current and added to its swiftness. I had scarcely ceased to hear the dash of the water as I proceeded, when a clear, rich voice, singing what I could distinguish to be one of the ancient songs of the country, fell upon my ear. The sound proceeded from a dwelling at no great distance, built of dark-colored stones, united by that cement for which the Moors were so famous, and which has all the hardness and durability of the living rock. It was a high building, with small doors and narrow windows, whose depth showed the extraordinary thickness of the wall. At one of these jealous-looking openings I could discern two youthful female faces, one of which I judged must belong to the singer. I stopped involuntarily, listening to the music, and struck with the beauty of the scene before me, for passing beautiful it was, in the rich reflection of the sun from the western heavens. The glow of the sky itself was scarcely less gorgeous than the aspect of the flowery ground and glittering stream beneath it. It was one of those charming spots

you so often come upon in the province of Andalusia—natural gardens, uncultivated, but overspread with a spontaneous luxuriance and beauty of vegetation, and teeming with plants which in other soils and climates require the tendance of man. The air was fragrant with a thousand trodden aromatic herbs, with fields of lavender, and with the brightest roses blushing in tufts all over the meadows, or breathing forth their sweetness from the secrecy of myrtle thickets and clumps of the fig-tree and pomegranate. The sounds I had heard seemed worthy to mingle with this bright and perfumed atmosphere, and to thrill the beautiful scenery around me.

I was yet listening, when the strain suddenly ceased, and a good-looking Spaniard, with an olive complexion, clad in one of the short jackets of the country, came out to me and hospitably invited me to enter. I did so, and he presented me to his daughters, two pretty, black-eyed Andalusian damsels, who placed before me the wines and fruits of the country. I took occasion to thank the young ladies for the pleasure they had afforded me without intending it, and ventured to request a repetition of the air that had pleased me so much. The young daughter, Conchita, for so her father called her—a prettier and fonder name than her baptismal appellation, Conception—complied, without any other apology or sign of reluctance than the slight blush that ran at first over her cheeks and forehead, and gave me, in her best manner, the romance, translated below, beginning with—

“Diamante falso y fingido,  
Engastado en pedernal,” etc.

The plaintive effect of the three first stanzas was skilfully contrasted by the singer with the sprightliness of the close, in which Raduan replies to the complaints of Fatima.

“Cesad, hermosas estrellas !  
Que es bien que no lloreis mas ;  
Que si a mi me llameis piedra,  
En piedras haceis senal,” etc.



I am not a novelist, and cannot give my readers, from memory, word for word, a song of several dozen lines, which I have heard but once. I desired, however, a copy of the words of the ballad, and Francisca the elder dictated them to me while I wrote them down with a pocket-pencil upon the back of a letter from my old friend, Mr. Adam Adrian Viellecour. When I had done, I read them over, and the young ladies smiled at the bad Castilian which had naturally enough found its way into the lines of the ballad, and good-naturedly corrected it. I then took leave of my hospitable entertainer and his daughters, and was dismissed with abundance of Spanish courtesy. As it was late, they sent a servant to guide me to my lodgings, which were distant about three miles, and which at that time of night, and in a country without roads, I should not have been able to find without such assistance. I have never since that time seen either Conchita or Francisca, but I have often met them in my dreams, and heard over again the plaintive strain of "*Diamante falso*" with a distinctness that has sometimes awakened me from sleep. In the following lines I have attempted to transfuse somewhat of its spirit into English verse:

"False diamond set in flint ! hard heart in haughty breast !  
By a softer, warmer bosom the tiger's couch is prest.  
Thou art fickle as the sea, thou art wandering as the wind,  
And the restless ever-mounting flame is not more hard to bind.  
If all the tears I shed were tongues, they yet too few would be  
To tell of all the treachery that thou hast shown to me.  
Oh ! I could chide thee sharply—but every maiden knows  
That she who chides her lover, forgives him ere he goes.

"Thou hast called me oft the flower of all Granada's maids,  
Thou hast said that by the side of me the first and fairest fades ;  
And they thought thy heart was mine, and it seemed to every one  
That what thou didst to win my love, for love of me was done.  
Alas ! if they but knew thee, as mine it is to know,  
They well might see another mark to which thine arrows go ;

But thou giv'st me little heed—for I speak to one who knows  
That she who chides her lover, forgives him ere he goes.

“‘It wearies me, mine enemy, that I must weep and bear  
What fills thy heart with triumph, and fills my own with care.  
Thou art leagued with those that hate me, and ah ! thou know'st I  
    feel  
That cruel words as surely kill as sharpest blades of steel.  
'Twas the doubt that thou wert false that wrung my heart with pain ;  
But, now I know thy perfidy, I shall be well again.  
I would proclaim thee as thou art—but every maiden knows  
That she who chides her lover, forgives him ere he goes.’”\*

“Thus Fatima complained to the valiant Raduan,  
Where underneath the myrtles Alhambra's fountains ran.  
The Moor was inly moved, and blameless as he was,  
He took her white hand in his own, and pleaded thus his cause :  
'Oh, lady, dry those star-like eyes—their dimness does me wrong ;  
If my heart be made of flint, at least 'twill keep thy image long.  
Thou has uttered cruel words—but I grieve the less for those,  
Since she who chides her lover, forgives him ere he goes.’”\*

It is of small consequence to the reader to know by what means at another time I was put in possession of the originals of the two ballads introduced in the little poem of “Eva” which follows. The circumstances might not, it is true, be altogether unamusing, and, if I should ever publish my travels, they shall appear in their proper place. At present I have no room for them ; but I must allude to one or two passages in the ballads, marked by certain peculiarities of style, which I have preserved, not because they were in conformity with my own taste, but with a design to make my version as nearly as I was able a faithful copy of the original.

The first of the passages to which I refer is near the close of “The Alcayde of Molina,” and is as follows :

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\* These lines appear in the earlier editions of Mr. Bryant's poems ; but it has been thought best to restore them to the narrative in which they first occurred.—ED.

"These eyes shall not recall thee, though they meet no more thy own,  
Though they weep that I am absent, and that thou art all alone."

This is the very expression of the original:

"No te llamaran mis ojos,  
Aunque viendo su miseria  
Lloraran, sin ver los tuyos,  
Mi soledad y tu ausencia."

The practice seems to have been early introduced into Spanish poetry of calling a lady by the name of the most brilliant and expressive feature of her countenance, her eyes—the principal weapon of her conquest, and in the silent language of whose glances the lover read his fate. This was a standing figure of speech among the poets. When one of them addressed a love-song to his mistress, he styled her "ojos bellos," beautiful eyes; "ojos serenos," serene eyes. When he would entreat her not to weep, he begged the bright stars not to dim themselves with tears: *Cesad hermosas estrellas*, already cited in "Fatima and Raduan."

Green eyes were anciently thought a feature of great beauty in Spain, and there is a very pretty ballad by an absent lover, in which he addresses his lady by the title of "green eyes," supplicating that he may remain in her remembrance:

"¡Ay ojuelos verdes!  
Ay los mis ojuelos!  
Ay hagan los cielos  
Que de mi te acuerdes!"

In no civilized country of the present day would a lady think herself greatly flattered by having the appellation of *green eyes* conferred upon her.

In the other Moriscan ballad, "The Death of Aliatar," is one of those conceits which afterward became so common in Spanish poetry, when Gongora introduced what he called the *estilo culto*, or cultivated style, a perpetual tissue of affectations

and extravagances, much like the euphuism which at one time was so fashionable in England. I am somewhat sorry to find it deforming so spirited a composition as this old ballad. It, however, makes a much worse figure in my English than it does in the original, where its antique quaintness almost recommends it to favor. I refer to the lines :

“ Say, Love—for thou didst see her tears—  
     Oh, no ! he drew more tight  
 The blinding fillet o’er his lids,  
     To spare his eyes the sight.”

These lines stand thus in the original :

“ Dilo tu, Amor, si lo viste ;  
     ¡ Mas ay ! que de lastimado  
 Diste otro nudo a la venda  
     Para no ver lo que ha pasado.”

With these remarks, partly by way of preface and partly by way of apology, I leave the poem in the hands of the reader :

*EVA.*

Spring had come, with light and showers,  
     Over Cordova’s bright vales ;  
 Tender leaves and founts and flowers  
     Stirred and glittered in the gales.  
 Seated in the almond shade,  
     While her lover o’er her hung,  
 Bright as spring, a Spanish maid  
     Touched her light guitar and sung.

“ Call’st thou her a maid of Spain ?—  
     Aye—the Ave and the bead  
 And the cross, that on its chain  
     Hangs and sparkles, speak her creed.  
 But her eye !—the Desert there  
     Gleams through many a jetty curl :  
 That dark eye and raven hair  
     Might become an Arab girl.



“ Flodoardo, musing long  
 On the Moors in ancient years,  
 On their glory and their wrongs  
 I am almost moved to tears.  
 False their creed—misguided men—  
 Heaven their unbelief forgive !  
 Yet more gallant knights than then  
 Never on the earth did live.

“ Life was light and worthless weighed  
 'Gainst the smile a bright eye gave,  
 And the ribbon's graceful braid  
 Bound the knight the lady's slave.  
 Oh ! what words the fair could say  
 To her lover kneeling low !—  
 Listen—'tis a quaint old lay,  
 Framed and warbled long ago.”

“ To the town of Atienza, Molina's brave Alcaide,  
 The courteous and the valorous, led forth his bold brigade.  
 The Moor came back in triumph, he came without a wound,  
 With many a Christian standard, and Christian captive bound.  
 He passed the city portals, with swelling heart and vein,  
 And toward his lady's dwelling he rode with slackened rein ;  
 Two circuits on his charger he took, and at the third,  
 From the door of her balcony Zelinda's voice was heard.  
 ‘ Now if thou wert not shameless,’ said the lady to the Moor,  
 ‘ Thou wouldst neither pass my dwelling, nor stop before my door.  
 Alas for poor Zelinda, and for her wayward mood,  
 That one in love with peace should have loved a man of blood !  
 Since not that thou wert noble I chose thee for my knight,  
 But that thy sword was dreaded in tourney and in fight.  
 Ah, thoughtless and unhappy ! that I should fail to see  
 How ill the stubborn flint and the yielding wax agree.  
 Boast not thy love for me, while the shrieking of the fife  
 Can change thy mood of mildness to fury and to strife.  
 Say not my voice is magic—thy pleasure is to hear  
 The bursting of the carbine, and shivering of the spear.

Well, follow thou thy choice—to the battle-field away,  
 To thy triumphs and thy trophies, since I am less than they.  
 Thrust thy arm into thy buckler, gird on thy crooked brand,  
 And call upon thy trusty squire to bring thy spears in hand.  
 Lead forth thy band to skirmish, by mountain and by mead,  
 On thy dappled Moorish barb, or thy fleeter border steed.  
 Go, waste the Christian hamlets, and sweep away their flocks,  
 From Almazan's broad meadows to Siguënza's rocks.  
 Leave Zelinda altogether, whom thou leavest oft and long,  
 And in the life thou lovest, forget whom thou dost wrong.  
 These eyes shall not recall thee, though they meet no more thine own,  
 Though they weep that thou art absent, and that I am all alone.'  
 She ceased, and turning from him her flushed and angry cheek,  
 Shut the door of her balcony before the Moor could speak."

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When the almond sprays o'erhead  
 Rang with that wild air no more,  
 "Thus," the dark-eyed Eva said,  
 "Ladies chid their knights of yore,  
 And the lover meekly heard  
 Till the lady smiled again ;  
 Oh ! an angry look or word  
 Did not lose a lover then.  
 "But the heart that in its pride  
 Thus could prompt the chiding tongue,  
 When the knight in battle died,  
 Keenly, cruelly was wrung.  
 Bitter, bitter tears did stain  
 Beauteous eyes that wept the bold,  
 Listen to another strain,  
 Sad and sweet, though quaint and old."

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"'Tis not with gilded sabres that gleam in baldricks blue,  
 Nor nodding plumes in caps of Fez, of gay and gaudy hue—  
 But, habited in mourning weeds, come marching from afar,  
 By four and four, the valiant men who fought with Aliatar.

All mournfully and slowly the afflicted warriors come,  
To the deep wail of the trumpet, and beat of muffled drum.

“The banner of the Phœnix, the flag that loved the sky,  
That scarce the wind dared wanton with, it flew so proud and high—  
Now leaves its place in battle-field, and sweeps the ground in grief,  
The bearer drags its glorious folds behind the fallen chief,  
As mournfully and slowly the afflicted warriors come,  
To the deep wail of the trumpet, and beat of muffled drum.

“Brave Aliatar led forward a hundred Moors to go  
To where his brother held Motril against the leaguering foe.  
On horseback went the gallant Moor, that gallant band to lead ;  
And now his bier is at the gate, from which he pricked his steed.  
While mournfully and slowly the afflicted warriors come,  
To the deep wail of the trumpet, and beat of muffled drum.

“The knights of the Grand Master in crowded ambush lay ;  
They rushed upon him where the reeds were thick beside the way ;  
They smote the valiant Aliatar, they smote the warrior dead,  
And broken, but not beaten, were the gallant ranks he led.  
Now mournfully and slowly the afflicted warriors come,  
To the deep wail of the trumpet, and beat of muffled drum.

“Oh ! what was Zayda’s sorrow, how passionate her cries !  
Her lover’s wounds streamed not more free than that poor maiden’s  
eyes.  
Say, Love—for did’st thou see her tears—oh, no ! he drew more  
tight  
The blinding fillet o’er his lids to spare his eyes the sight.  
While mournfully and slowly the afflicted warriors come,  
To the deep wail of the trumpet, and beat of muffled drum.

“Nor Zayda only weeps him, but all that dwell between  
The great Alhambra’s palace walls and springs of Albaicin.  
The ladies weep the flower of knights, the brave the bravest here ;  
The people weep a champion, the Alcaydes a noble peer.  
While mournfully and slowly the afflicted warriors come,  
To the deep wail of the trumpet, and beat of muffled drum.”

## FEMALE TROUBADOURS.\*

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IT happened a few months since that I was one morning in the library of my old and excellent friend, Mr. De Viellecour, at New Rochelle, engaged in reading a favorite work—"Johnson's Lives of the English Poets." I was looking over his celebrated discussion of the question whether Pope was a poet. It struck me that our great English critic—for so we may call him, although to some of the offices of poetical criticism he was evidently unequal—had by no means said all that he might have done on his side of the question. He had omitted to adduce those felicitous sprinklings of rural imagery to be found in all the writings of his favorite author, not indeed gathered from a wide sphere of observation, but still vivid, true, and striking, copied directly from nature, and showing him to have been no inattentive or unmoved observer of her beauties. I was startled in the midst of these reflections by the voice of my friend, who had entered the room without my perceiving it.

"Reading Johnson's 'Lives'?" said he. "You do well; it is a good, sensible book in the main; but, if an entertaining book is what you want, you should take up old John of Nostradamus, the earliest biographer of the poets that has written in a modern language—the earliest, I mean, whose works have been published. Your Johnson, I allow, is philosophical, di-

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\* Entitled *Phanette des Gantelmes*, in "The Talisman," 1830.



dactic, and critical; Nostradamus is nothing of all this; but is it not better to make no distinctions than to make false ones? Is it not better to do nothing than to do wrong? Johnson strives hard to pilfer a few leaves from the laurels of Milton; he carps at Collins and Grey, and praises Savage. But John of Nostradamus praises everybody; there was no gall in his ink; every writer of Provençal rhymes is with him a divine and sovereign poet. Here is his book, and you must become acquainted with him, for it is fit that my friends should know each other."

Saying this, he took down from one of the upper shelves a little duodecimo volume, neatly bound in parchment. "Look here," continued my venerable friend, "this is the work of honest Nostradamus, a lawyer of the Parliament of Provence, published at Lyons, in 1575, by the old bookseller Alexander Marsilij. See the leaves; what a rich, reddish tinge of antiquity they have! I have got Turner, who is a man of taste, to bind it anew after the ancient fashion, so that you may imagine it to look exactly as it did when fresh from the shelves of the Lyonese bookseller. You love quaint authors; here is quaintness to your heart's content, amid the greatest simplicity; here is no splitting of hairs, no affectation of acuteness, no struggle to be discriminating; and yet in the compass of these two hundred and fifty small pages, which would hardly contain the life of Pope in the book you are reading, you will find a collection of characters the most peculiar, various, and strikingly contrasted. My Nostradamus is a natural Theophrastus, an unconscious La Bruyère, and his descriptions of character are far more true to nature than those of either of these authors. Here, for example, you will read of the proud and boastful and brave Pierre Vidal, who claimed the crown of Constantinople, and built ships to go to the conquest of his vain empire; who despised all omens, and even defied the elements. And you will read also of the timid and superstitious Beral des Baux, who, journeying from Avignon to his estates, was induced to turn back in the way by a story which an old

woman told him of a raven croaking on the top of a dead willow; and who finally died of fear at seeing one of these birds sitting opposite to his window as he was dining in company with his wife. Here is the story of the caustic and bilious Luco de Grymaud, who lampooned the Pope, and whose satire being suppressed and burnt by the magistrate, he wrote it out from memory with tenfold point and bitterness. Here, also, is the life of the fat and funny Anselme Faydit, who lampooned nobody and amused everybody, and who finally died of obesity occasioned by laughter and good living. Here is Boniface de Castellane, who, when tipsy, wrote with the inspiration of a prophet; and here is Giraud de Bournelh, the flower of Provençal poets, who drank no beverage more inspiring than water. Giraud declared that he never knew the passion of love; but, if you would read of a tender, devoted knight, turn to the life of Aymeric de Belvezer, and learn how he loved the fair Barbosse, a princess of Provence—"a lady of eternal beauty, holy manners, and infinite graces"; how he was permitted to assist her in drawing on her glove in the august presence of the Infanta Beatrix, of Savoy; how the lady replied to the railleries of those around her, that too much honor could never be shown by ladies of high rank to those whose verses immortalized the renown of their beauty; and how the royal Beatrix approved of the answer. If you are merry, Nostradamus will divert you with the wicked waggery of Peter de Reuer, who personated a monk and recited his own love-songs in the pulpits in place of the seven penitential psalms; if you are grave, he will edify you with the life of Bernard Rascas, who endowed a hospital for the poor of Jesus Christ."\*

"Poets were rather richer in those days than at present, I fancy, Mr. Viellecour," said I, "otherwise one of their tribe would scarcely have been able to endow a hospital." "Right,

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\* Fuller accounts of some of these are given in the review of Nostradamus, *ante*, p. 68.

Herbert, they were so. The art was then new, wondered at and valued; now it is common, familiar and cheap. Why, our very school-boys write almost as well as Byron's worst. Poetry was in that age like the earliest flowers or the earliest fruits that are brought to market—rare and coveted, and paid for at a high price. Decayed gentlemen who cultivated the art of verse restored their dilapidated fortunes by the munificence of princes; men of obscure parentage rose into celebrity and honor. Did not Raymond de Mirevaux recover his family castle by the gains of 'his beautiful and rich poetry,' as Nostradamus calls it? Did not Guy D'Uzez, and Ebles and Pierre, his brothers, and Helias, their cousin—but I weary you with this muster-roll of names. Lay by your Johnson and read the book, I pray you, and be amused. If you wish for anything duller upon the same subject, there is the prolix history of the Abbé Millot,\* and, if you choose to dip into the works of the old Provençal bards themselves, there is the collection of M. Raynouard, in six volumes, made a few years since—the only copy, I venture to say, on this side the Atlantic." I promised my friend to read the book, and he left me.

The new world of literature, manners, and, in some degree, of morals also, into which it introduced me, excited my curiosity to undertake the reading of the old Provençal poets themselves, which I attempted during my stay with my friend, but found them so difficult that, after mastering a few of the ballads, I desisted. It struck me, in the course of my reading, that the history of Provençal literature showed a higher degree of refinement and education among the female sex than had commonly been supposed to belong to so early a period as the twelfth century and the two succeeding ones. It is natural enough to suppose that the ladies would study what they valued so highly, and learn, at least, to read those verses of whose merit they were constituted the judges, and of which the emotions called forth by their

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\* "*Histoire Litteraire des Troubadours*," in 3 vols.

charms were the principal subject ; but we find they did more. They became poetesses ; they vied with the other sex in contributing to the rise of modern literature, some of the first flowers of which were planted by the fairest hands in Provence. Indeed, if we consider both what they wrote and what their encouragement caused to be written, I am more than half inclined to think that we should award to them the chief honors of the creation of a literature in the tongues of modern Europe.

Among the ladies whom Nostradamus mentions as distinguished by their poetic genius is the Countess of Die, who flourished in the twelfth century, at the court of Provence, where her verses were in much request. He mentions the titles of one or two of her compositions. He speaks also of a lady whose name he does not give, the mother of the troubadour Marchebrusc, "of the house of the Cabots, a noble and very ancient race of Poitiers, a lady learned and skilful in good letters, a most famous poetess in the Provençal and other modern tongues, and one of those who held a solemn court of love at Avignon, whither repaired all the poets, both gentlemen and ladies, of the country, to hear the decisions in questions and disputations of love proposed there or sent thither by the lords and ladies of all the districts and provinces around." She flourished in the fourteenth century, while Clement VI held the papal court at Avignon. "Happy did the poet esteem himself," says old Nostradamus, "who succeeded in getting possession of a song or sonnet that she had made."

But by far the most extraordinary personage among these literary ladies of the middle ages was Phanette, or Stephanette, or Estephanette des Gantelmes—for by all these names was she called—a noble lady of Romanin, and the aunt of Petrarch's Laura. She was, says the monk of the Golden Isles, quoted by Nostradamus, "passing excellent in poetry, and wrote with an enthusiasm and inspiration which were esteemed a true gift of God." By her was Laura instructed in all the



learning of the time within the reach of her sex. Mrs. Dobson, in her voluminous and mawkish book about Petrarch and Laura, intimates that, although the latter knew how to sew and to spin, she was never taught to read or to write. But Mrs. Dobson unluckily knew very little about either Petrarch or Laura. Hear the testimony of the great Nostradamus to the literary accomplishments of the inspired Phanette and her beautiful niece. "These ladies were humble in speech, wise in act, polite in conversation, flourishing and accomplished in every virtue, admirable in good manners and elegant form, and so well educated that every one coveted their love. Both composed ballads readily in every kind of Provençal metre, according to what the monk of the Golden Isles hath written, whose works bear ample testimony to their learning. And, as in past times Estephanetta, Countess of Provence, Adalasia, Viscountess of Avignon, and other illustrious ladies were esteemed for learning, so were also these ladies of Provence, whose renown filled all the country." A little after, he mentions Jehanne de Baux, Huguette de Forcalquier, Brainde of Agoult, Countess of Luns, Blanche of Flessans, surnamed Blancflour, and a great number of other high-born and illustrious ladies of that time residing in Avignon, while the Roman court was held in that city. "These," says he, "addicted themselves to the study of letters, holding public courts of love, and deciding the questions of love proposed there, by means of which and of their beautiful and glorious compositions, their renown spread into foreign countries—into France and Italy and Spain." The biographers then proceed to name a multitude of Provençal poets "who wrote volumes of songs and of beautiful and pleasant ballads to their praise and honor."

Such were the literary ladies of that early age, whose rivals are scarcely to be met with even now, in this late autumn of our literature, when the seed scattered by their hands has sprung up and ripened into an abundant harvest all over the civilized world. Nor were they or their brethren in the art

of verse unfortunate in their biographer. A monk of the ancient family of Cybo, in Genoa, better known as the monk of the Golden Isles, having been appointed librarian of the monastery of St. Honoratus, in the Isle of Lérins, undertook, about the close of the fourteenth century, just after the race of the troubadours had passed away, the task of recording their lives and enumerating their writings. His work, which was written in the Provençal language, and copies of which were eagerly sought for by the nobility and scholars of Provence, probably yet remains in manuscript among the archives of the ancient houses of that country. From him Nostradamus derived his principal facts when he published in French his lives of the ancient Provençal poets.

The ecclesiastic seems to have been well fitted by his tastes and characters for the work he had undertaken. It is the proper task of the tranquil and contemplative to record the lives of the impassioned and enthusiastic. Nostradamus, in his quaint old French, which I fear I shall mar in my translation, says that "every year, both in spring and in autumn, he was wont to retire for several days, accompanied by a religious friend, a lover of virtue, to his little hermitage in the Isles of Hieres, or the Golden Isles, where the monastery of St. Honoratus had for a long time a little church dependent upon it, whence it comes that the said monk was surnamed of the Golden Isles. Thither he went to listen to the sweet and pleasant murmur of the little brooks and fountains, and the song of the birds, observing their various plumage, and contemplating the figures of the little animals, all different from those on this side of the sea. These did he copy and counterfeit to the very life, and made a fair collection thereof, which was found among his books after his death, wherein he had depicted beautiful landscapes, all the sea-shore of the said Isles of Hieres and villages seated thereon, all rare and exquisite herbs and plants with their flowers and fruits, the trees which grow naturally in the islands, the beasts and other animals of every kind, and perspective of the mountains, mead-

ows, and all those delicious fields watered with fair and clear fountains, fishes of the sea, and vessels which pass over it with full sails—all so well represented and imitated after nature that one might have imagined them to be the very same.”

In this delightful retreat the monk of the Golden Isles studied the Provençal poets, and sought out the meaning of passages, which, as he complains, were rendered obscure and difficult by the foreign idioms which the multitude of Italian, Spanish, and English troubadours had employed in their verses. But the spot had a charm independent of its natural beauty; it was hallowed by recollections of the most renowned of the Provençal poetesses. Phanette des Gantelmes had frequently visited the island where the monk had his hermitage, and often passed the spring months at the castle of a relation commanding a view of the sea. The Isles of Hieres are well called the Golden Isles, for they possess a softer and more genial climate than any other part of France, and produce the golden and fragrant fruits that are matured only in the lands of the sun. The Mediterranean, the tideless waters of which embrace their rocky shores, gives to the atmosphere the voluptuous mildness of the skies of southern Italy, and keeps from the soil the frosts of winter. The crags, the sources of sweet springs and cheerful brooks, overlook hollows fragrant with the myrtle, the pomegranate, and the orange, and the groves are full of the gay birds of a warm climate. It is a place where even those least tinctured with poetical enthusiasm might feel the charm of verse, and the dullest ear delight in listening long to the voice of music, so well do bright imaginations and sweet sounds harmonize with the beautiful scenery and the delicious softness of the air. Some of the learned have supposed that in one of these charming islands Calypso so long detained Ulysses, forgetful of his spouse and his native country.

Here Phanette des Gantelmes composed some of the most beautiful of her poems. One of the most successful efforts of the pencil of the monk of the Golden Isles, or at least one

which in those days excited most admiration, was a representation of this lady sitting at a window of ancient Roman construction in her cousin's castle, looking out over the blue Mediterranean, bluer than ever in the bright, white moonlight, and meditating her impassioned verses. Her harp lay at her feet, a volume was in her delicate hand; but the limner, despairing to catch the expression of genius in her eyes, had represented her with her face turned toward the background, and showed only the round outline of her cheek. The picture is doubtless lost, and, even if we could recover it, it would not probably, in the present state of the arts, be found worthy of the admiration bestowed upon it in that age. My friend Weir, at my particular request, has adopted the idea of the old artist, and produced what is no doubt a much better picture, preserving the harp, the volume, the averted face, enlivening the waters with distant sails, and, with his usual taste, mingling the dress of the Italian courts with something of the Oriental costume, borrowed by the Provençals from their polished and courteous Arabian neighbors in Spain, whose manners and whose literature so strongly influenced their own.\*

It was in the fourteenth century, at the holding of one of those courts of love established at Avignon under the patronage of the popes, and in which Phanette des Gantelmes was one of the ladies who presided, that Bertrand de Rascas, a poet of Avignon, was acknowledged to have excelled the renowned Pierre Vidal. The court was held amid the shades of a magnificent garden. The lady-presidents, among whom were the Marchionesses of Malespine and Saluces, Clarette des Baux, Laurette de St. Laurens, Aloette de Meolhus, and several others mentioned by the monk of the Golden Isles, were seated on an elevated platform, and around them were ranged, sitting or standing, lords and ladies, gentlemen, poets, scholars, and the prelates of the papal courts. The *tençons*,

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\* This refers to an engraving, from a picture by Weir, printed in "The Talisman."—ED.



or arguments in rhyme on questions of love, submitted to the decision of the court, were opened by Phanette, who sat in the midst, and read aloud by a page standing at her right hand; and the judgment of the court, when agreed upon, was announced to the assembly by the strong voice of a herald.

Just as the ladies of the court were about to descend from their places, there appeared a gentleman somewhat fantastically dressed, but of a handsome face and graceful figure, who made his way through the courtly crowd, and, kneeling before the platform, presented a paper which he prayed might be read in open court. It was Arnaud Vidal, of Castelnau-dary, who claimed to be a descendant of Pierre Vidal, and to whom several years before the golden violet, instituted as a prize for the best Provençal poem, had been decreed at the Floral Games in Toulouse, for his song in honor of the Holy Virgin. The lady-president broke the seal of the paper, and the page read its contents in presence of the assembly. It was the famous allegorical description of Love, composed in the fourteenth century by Pierre Vidal, in which the poet, ignorant or disdainful of the images appropriated by classical antiquity to the personification of that passion, had clothed it in new and striking forms and allusions, borrowed directly from the age of chivalry in which he lived. The poem was accompanied by a brief commentary on its merit from the supposed descendant of its author, and a challenge to all modern poets in the Provençal tongue to produce on the subject of love verses equally worthy of a noble gentleman to compose and of a high-born lady to hear.

The following are the lines:

“The earth was sown with early flowers, the heavens were blue and bright—

I met a youthful cavalier as lovely as the light.

I knew him not—but in my heart his graceful image lies,

And well I marked his open brow, his sweet and tender eyes,

His ruddy lips that ever smiled, his glittering teeth betwixt,

And flowing robe embroidered o’er, with leaves and blossoms mixed.

He wore a chaplet of the rose ; his palfrey, white and sleek,  
Was marked with many an ebon spot, and many a purple streak ;  
Of jasper was his saddle-bow, his housings sapphire stone,  
And brightly in his stirrup glanced the purple calcedon.  
Fast rode the gallant cavalier, as youthful horsemen ride ;  
'Peyre Vidal ! know that I am Love,' the blooming stranger cried ;  
'And this is Mercy by my side, a dame of high degree ;  
This maid is Chastity,' he said, 'This squire is Loyalty.' "

A murmur of applause rose from the assembly as the page finished reading. The lords and ladies praised the invention and spirit of the old bard, and spoke of the decline of the art of verse. The herald then came forward, and in a loud voice demanded if any one present chose to accept the challenge offered by Arnaud Vidal, of Castelnaudary, in behalf of Pierre Vidal, his illustrious and incomparable ancestor. A man of grave demeanor was observed to beseech a tablet from one who stood next him. It was Bernard de Rascas, known as a learned jurisconsult, a skilful poet, and a relation of Clement VI, who had then just ascended the papal throne at Avignon. The eyes of all were turned upon him as he wrote a few lines on the tablet, and then handed it to a page, who laid it at the feet of the fair judges. The verses inscribed on it, the original of which is preserved by Nostradamus,\* were read to the assembly :

" All things that are on earth shall wholly pass away,  
Except the love of God, which shall live and last for aye.  
The forms of men shall be as they had never been ;  
The blasted groves shall lose their fresh and tender green ;  
The birds of the thicket shall end their pleasant song,  
And the nightingale shall cease to chant the evening long ;  
The kine of the pasture shall feel the dart that kills,  
And all the fair white flocks shall perish from the hills.  
The goat and antlered stag, the dread wolf and the fox,  
The wild-boar of the wood, and the chamois of the rocks,

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\* See the original on page 92.

And the strong and fearless bear, in the trodden dust shall lie ;  
And the dolphin of the sea, and the mighty whale, shall die.  
And realms shall be dissolved, and empires be no more,  
And they shall bow to death, who ruled from shore to shore ;  
And the great globe itself, so the holy writings tell,  
With the rolling firmament, where the starry armies dwell,  
Shall melt with fervent heat—they shall all pass away,  
Except the love of God, which shall live and last for aye."

There was an utter and deep silence when the page had done reading these lines, which was broken at length by the voice of the herald proclaiming the decision of the court, that Bernard Rascas had excelled Pierre Vidal, inasmuch as the love of God was nobler than the love of woman, and the verses of Bernard Rascas were of nobler invention than the verses of Pierre Vidal. The successful poet, amid the applauses of the company, was then admitted to the honor of kissing the hand of Phanette des Gantelmes, the chief president of the Court of Love, and the assembly was dismissed.

"Five years afterward," says Nostradamus, "Phanette des Gantelmes, the noble and notable lady of Romanin, and her niece, Laurette de Sado, who yet seems to live in the poetry of Petrarch, died at Avignon, in the time of the great plague which lasted three years, and which many named *Lou flagel mortal de Dieu*, the deadly scourge of God, for the usuries and rapines, simonies and impieties, that reigned there."

## OLDHAM'S POEMS.\*

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I HAVE been looking over the poems of Oldham, which are now little read. I have never seen the book in any private library in this country ; and yet a poet whom Dryden warmly commended, and from whom Pope and Swift and Johnson did not disdain to borrow, cannot be entirely unworthy of attention, even in an age which has produced so many eminent poets as that in which we live.

John Oldham was born in Gloucestershire, England, in the year 1653. He was the son of a non-conformist clergyman, and seems to have inherited a certain independence of character, which he manifested in a different way from that of his father. He was educated at Oxford, but, owing to his narrow circumstances, was obliged to leave the university after taking his degree of Bachelor of Arts. He then became usher in a free school at Croydon, in Surrey. Some lines in his "Satire addressed to a Friend about to leave the University" refer, sadly enough, to the condition of a teacher in those days :

"Go wed some Grammar-Bridewell and a wife,  
And there beat Greek and Latin for your life.  
With birchen sceptre there command at will,  
Greater than Busby's self, or Doctor Gill.  
But who would be to the vile drudgery bound,  
When there so small encouragement is found ?

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\* From "Old and New " for September, 1872.



Where you, for recompense of all your pains,  
 Shall hardly reach a common fiddler's gains?  
 For, when you've toiled and labored all you can,  
 To dung and cultivate a barren brain,  
 A dancing-master shall be better paid,  
 Though he instructs the heels, and you the head.  
 To such indulgence are kind parents grown,  
 That naught costs less in breeding than a son;  
 Nor is it hard to find a father now  
 Shall more upon a setting-dog allow,  
 And with a freer hand reward the care  
 Of training up a spaniel than his heir."

While in this school, Oldham composed a "Pindaric Ode to the Memory of Charles Morwent," who seems to have died by the disease which afterward carried off the poet, namely, the small-pox. He celebrates the pustules of the disease on the body of his dead friend with conceits like those of Cleaveland or Cowley:

"Those asterisks, placed in the margin of thy skin,  
 Point out the nobler soul that dwelt within.  
 Thy lesser, like the greater world, appears  
 All over bright, all over stuck with stars.  
 So Indian luxury, when it would be trim,  
 Hangs pearls on every limb.

"Thus, among ancient Picts, nobility  
 In blemishes did lie:  
 Each by his spots more honorable grew,  
 And from their store a greater value drew.  
 Their kings were known by the royal stains they bore,  
 And in their skins their ermine wore."

Some of Oldham's verses, in manuscript, coming to the hands of the wits of London, three of them, Rochester, Dorset, and Sedley, were so much struck with their merit that they came to Croydon on a visit to the young poet. He was afterward tutor in a family at Reigate, and while there wrote his

"Satires upon the Jesuits," remarkable for the vigor and vehemence, not to say the coarseness and extravagance, of the invective. This was about the time of what was called the popish plot; and the satires of Oldham falling in with the public feeling, which was then greatly excited against the Catholics, brought him immediately into general notice. Here is a sample of his satirical vein when speaking of the Jesuits:

"One undertakes by scale of miles to tell  
The bounds, dimensions, and extent of hell ;  
How far and wide the infernal monarch reigns ;  
How many German miles his realm contains ;  
Who are his ministers, pretends to know,  
And what their several offices below ;  
How many chaldrons he each year expends  
In coals for roasting Huguenots and fiends ;  
And with as much exactness states the case  
As if he'd been surveyor of the place.  
Another frights the rout with rueful stories  
Of wild chimeras, limbos, purgatories,  
And bloated souls in smoky durance hung,  
Like a Westphalia gammon or neat's tongue,  
To be redeemed with masses and a song.  
A good round sum must the deliverance buy ;  
For none may there swear out on poverty.  
Your rich and bounteous shades are only eased :  
No Fleet or King's bench ghosts are thence released."

This is one of the mildest passages. His success in these satires induced him, in 1680, to go to the metropolis, where he made the acquaintance and acquired the friendship of Dryden, which, however, he did not long enjoy. In 1683 he was seized with the small-pox, which carried him off in his thirtieth year. A volume of his "Remains" was published soon afterward, to which the poets of the time prefixed elegiac verses. Those of Dryden are well known, beginning with the lines—

"Farewell, too little and too lately known,  
Whom I began to think and call my own."

I cannot help copying another passage, notwithstanding some incongruity of metaphor in the last couplet :

“Oh, early ripe ! to thy abundant store  
What could advancing age have added more ?  
It might, what Nature never gives the young,  
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue ;  
But satire needs not those, and wit will shine  
Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line.”

In publishing his works, Oldham declined to comply with the custom of the time by dedicating them to some rich and eminent patron. His “*Satires upon the Jesuits, and Some other Pieces by the same Hand,*” appeared with only a few prefatory observations, which he called an “*Advertisement*”; and two other volumes of “*Poems and Translations,*” which appeared at different periods in his lifetime, were equally unprovided with dedications. In the second of these publications he speaks of the time, yet to arrive, when he may publish an edition of his works, arranged with some attention to their proper order, and when the author, he says, “meant to have ready a very sparkish dedication, if he can get himself known to some great man, that will give a good parcel of guineas for being handsomely flattered.” Oldham asked favor and patronage from no man’s hand. If the reading world did not like his verses, there was an end of the matter : he was content to be a school-master or a tutor.

The “*Satires upon the Jesuits*” are four in number. In the first, the ghost of Garnet, the priest, is introduced, laying down to his Jesuit pupils the rules of their duty, and exhorting them to every possible crime and immorality. The next is a vehement denunciation of the whole order of Jesuits. In the third, Loyola, the founder of their order, is represented on his death-bed as giving instructions to his disciples, of which the following is a sample :

“’Ne’er let the Nazarene, whose badge and name  
You wear, upbraid you with a conscious shame.

Leave him his slighted homilies and rules,  
To stuff the squabbles of the wrangling schools ;  
Disdain that he and the poor angling tribe  
Should laws and government to you prescribe.  
Let none of those good fools your patterns make ;  
Instead of them, the mighty Judas take—  
Renowned Iscariot, fit alone to be  
The example of our great society,  
Whose daring guilt disdained a common road,  
And scorned to stoop at sin beneath a God."

The popular fury against the Jesuits must have reached a great height when extravagances like these could make a poet's fortune. The fourth satire is put into the mouth of Loyola's wooden image, and relates the methods used for operating on the superstitious temper of ignorant people.

The "Satires upon the Jesuits," though purporting to be written in rhymed heroics, are almost as remarkable for their bad rhymes as for the unmeasured vehemence of their invective. Sometimes it will happen that a whole page contains scarce a single rhyme, save those which are styled "allowable," and which, in fact, are no rhymes at all.

In the volume which contains these satires was also an ode in which the author derides and decries virtue, and pronounces a panegyric on vice—a production of small merit, but clearly ironical. There were in those days, as there are now, many of the class who do not understand a joke ; and they insisted upon interpreting Oldham literally, so that the poor poet was obliged to write another ode, not better than the first, under the title of "A Counterpart to the Satyre against Virtue," to convince the world that his censure of virtue was simply a jest.

Oldham was as fluent and eloquent in eulogy as he was in invective ; and, though immoderate in both, he is generally ingenious. Take, for example, this passage from his "Ode to the Memory of Charles Morwent" :



“ Had he who wished the art how to forget  
 Discovered its new worth in thee,  
 He had a double value on it set,  
 And justly scorned the ignoble art of memory.  
 No wrong could thy great soul to grief expose :  
 ’Twas placed as much out of the reach of those  
     As of material blows.

No injuries could thee provoke :  
 Thy softness always damp’t the stroke,  
 As flints on feather-beds are easiest broke.  
 Affronts could ne’er thy cool complexion heat,  
 Or chase thy temper from its settled state ;  
 But still thou stood’st unshockt by all,  
 As if thou hadst unlearn’t the power to hate,  
 Or, like the dove, wert born without a gall.

Thou only could’st to that high pitch arrivè,  
 To court abuses that thou might’st forgive.  
 Wrongs that in high esteem seemed courtesie,  
 And thou the first was e’er obliged by injury.”

And again in the same poem :

“ Thy soul within such silent pomp did keep,  
 As if humanity were lulled asleep,  
 So gentle was thy pilgrimage beneath,  
 Time’s unheard feet make scarce less noise,  
 Or the soft journey which a planet goes.  
 Life seemed all calm as its last breath,  
 A still tranquillity so hush’d thy breast,  
 As if some halcyon were its guest,  
 And there had built her nest.  
 It hardly now enjoys a greater rest.  
 As that smooth sea which wears the name of peace,  
 Still with one even face appears,  
 And feels no tides to change it from its place,  
 No waves to alter the fair form it bears.  
     As that unspotted sky,  
     Where Nile does want of rain supply,

Is free from clouds, from storm is ever free ;  
 So thy unvaried mind was always one,  
 And with such clear serenity still shone  
 As caused thy little world to seem all temperate zone."

Here is the character of a lady, drawn with the same profusion of color, yet very charmingly drawn :

"No act did e'er within her practice fall  
 Which for the atonement of a blush could call ;  
 No word of hers e'er greeted any ear  
 But what a saint at her last gasp might hear.  
 Scarcely her thoughts had ever sullied been  
 With the least print or stain of native sin ;  
 Devout she is, as holy hermits are,  
 Who share their time 'twixt extasie and prayer."

The lines which follow are from "The Praise of Homer":

"How trulier blind was dull antiquity,  
 Who fastened that unjust reproach on thee !  
 Who can the senseless tale believe ?  
 Who can to the false legend credit give ?  
 Or think thou wantedst sight by whom all others see ?  
 What land or region, how remote soe'er,  
 Does not so well described in thy great draughts appear,  
 That each thy native country seems to be,  
 And each to have been surveyed and measured out by thee ?  
 Whatever earth doth in her pregnant bowels bear,  
 Or on her fruitful surface wear ;  
 Whate'er the extended fields of air contain,  
 Or far extended territories of the main,  
 Is by thy skilful pencil so exactly shown,  
 We scarce discern where thou or Nature best has drawn.  
 Nor is thy quick, all-piercing eye  
 Or checked or bounded here ,  
 But further doth surpass, and further doth descry.  
 Beyond the travels of the sun and year,  
 Beyond this glorious scene of starry tapestry,

Where the vast purlieus of the sky,  
 And boundless waste of nature lies,  
 Thy voyages thou mak'st, and bold discoveries.  
 What there the gods in parliament debate,  
 What votes or acts the heavenly Houses pass,  
 By thee so well communicated was,  
 As if thou'dst been of that cabal of state,  
 As if thou hadst been sworn the privy-councillor of Fate."

The poem "Upon the Works of Ben Jonson," in which he describes the theatre before Jonson's time as groaning "under a wretched anarchy of wit," "unformed and void," is equally profuse of panegyric. It proceeds thus:

"A rude and undigested lump it lay,  
 Like the old chaos, ere the birth of light and day,  
 Till thy brave genius, like a new Creator, came  
 And undertook the mighty frame.  
 No shuffled atoms did the well-built work compose :  
 It from no lucky hit of blundering chance arose,  
 As some of this great fabric idly dream ;  
 But wise, all-seeing judgment did contrive,  
 And knowing art its graces give.  
 No sooner did thy soul with active force and fire  
 The dull and heavy mass inspire,  
 But straight throughout it let us see  
 Proportion, order, harmony ;  
 And every part did to the whole agree,  
 And straight appeared a beauteous new-made world of  
 poetry."

The poet who thus easily wielded the language of praise might, if he had been so disposed, have dispensed from full hands most ingenious flatteries to the rich noblemen of his time and country. But in one of his satires, in which he introduces the ghost of Spenser revisiting the earth to warn him against the folly of becoming a poet, I find these lines:

“A poet would be dear, and out of the way,  
Should he expect above a coachman's pay ;  
For this will any dedicate and lie,  
And daub the gaudy ass with flattery ?”

I have not, however, done with this poet's unpurchased panegyrics. Here is one passage more from the verses “To the Memory of Charles Morwent” :

“Let those gay fops that deem  
Their infamies accomplishment  
Grow scandalous to get esteem,  
And by disgrace strive to be eminent :  
Here thou disdain'dst the common road,  
Nor wouldst by aught be wooed  
To wear the vain iniquities of the mode.  
Vice with thy practice did so disagree  
Thou scarce could'st bear it in thy theory ;  
Thou didst such ignorance above knowledge prize ;  
And here to be unskilled is to be wise.  
Such the first founder of our blood,  
While yet untempted, stood,  
Contented only to know good.”

The “Paraphrase upon the Hymn of St. Ambrose”—that is to say, the well-known prose poem, beginning in the original Latin with *Te Deum laudamus*—contains the following passage, which, along with an evident flavor of the conceits of the age, is characterized by a certain magnificence of imagery and expression :

“Further than Nature's utmost shores and limits reach,  
The streams of thy unbounded glory stretch.  
Beyond the straits of scanty time and place,  
Beyond the ebbs and flows of Matter's narrow seas,  
They reach and fill the ocean of eternity and space.  
Infused like some vast, mighty soul,  
Thou dost inform and actuate this spacious whole ;  
Thy unseen hand doth the well-jointed frame sustain,  
Which else would to its primitive nothing shrink again ;



But most thou dost thy majesty display  
 In the bright realms of everlasting day.  
 There is thy residence ; there thou dost reign ;  
 There on a state of dazzling lustre sit ;  
 There shine in robes of pure, refined light,  
 Where sun's coarse rays are but a foil and stain,  
 And refuse stars the sweepings of thy glorious train."

I have referred to the obligations which the poets who lived after him owed to Oldham. Pope was the most frequent borrower. Here are two lines from his "Windsor Forest":

"Whom even the Saxon spared, and bloody Dane,  
 The wanton victims of his sport remain."

Oldham, in his first "Satire against the Jesuits," says:

"What neither Saxon rage could here inflict,  
 Nor Danes more savage, nor the barbarous Pict,  
 All this and more be dared and done by you."

In Pope's pastoral entitled "Winter" we read:

"The balmy zephyrs, silent since her death,  
 Lament the ceasing of a sweeter breath."

In Oldham's imitation of the pastoral of Moschus called "Bion," "bemoaning the death of the Earl of Rochester," are these lines:

"Fair Galatea, too, laments thy death—  
 Laments the ceasing of thy tuneful breath."

In the "Epistle of Elöise to Abelard" Pope makes the writer say:

"See my lips tremble, and my eyeballs roll,  
 Suck my last gasp, and catch my flying soul."

In Oldham's "Lamentation for Adonis," imitated out of the Greek of "Bion of Smyrna," I find this couplet:

"Kiss, while I watch thy swimming eyeballs roll,  
 Watch thy last gasp, and catch thy springing soul."

Pope, in his "Prologue to the Satires," referring to Ambrose Phillips, says that he—

"Just writes to make his barrenness appear,  
And strains from hard-bound brains eight lines a year."

Oldham, in his "Letter from the Country to a Friend in Town," says:

"Verses, the boast of drudging fools, from some,  
Nay, most of scribblers, with much straining come :  
They void 'em dribbling, and in pain they write."

In Oldham's "Satire Dissuading from the Study of Poetry," the ghost of Spenser is thus described :

"Famished his looks appeared, his eyes sunk in :  
Like morning-gown about him hung his skin."

This couplet is adopted by Pope in the third book of the "Dunciad" with but slight variation :

"No meagre, muse-rid mope, adust and thin,  
In a dun night-gown of his own loose skin."

There are other single lines taken, with slight change, from Oldham by Pope, as for example the line—

"Slaves to an hour, and vassals to a bell."

Changed by Pope into—

"Slave to a wife, or vassal to a punk."

And—

"The glory and the scandal of the age."

Varied by Pope thus :

"The glory of the priesthood and the shame."

Pope learned from Oldham the art, which he practiced with so much happiness and success, of imitating the Latin satirists in such a manner as to keep the original framework of the Roman poem, and substitute, for ancient examples and

illustrations, others drawn from modern life and modern society. Indeed, it is not possible to read Oldham's works without being often reminded, notwithstanding the ruggedness and negligence of the versification, of something in Pope which shows him to have carefully read his predecessor.

Oldham imitated the same satire of Juvenal (the third) which Johnson took for the basis of his "London"; and it is curious to compare the two imitations. If Johnson does not offend, as Oldham often does, by rugged lines and careless phrases, with here and there a touch of coarseness, Oldham has at least a richer, though a homelier, stock of illustrations, and in this respect is nearer to Juvenal than Johnson could claim to be. It is curious that, for the Greek parasite of Juvenal, both Oldham and Johnson substitute the Frenchman. Oldham says:

"Another cause which I must boldly own,  
And not the least for which I quit the town,  
Is to behold it made the common sewer  
Where France does all her filth and ordure pour."

The metaphor in the last couplet is borrowed by Johnson:

"London, the needy villain's general home,  
The common sewer of Paris and of Rome,  
With eager thirst, by folly or by fate,  
Sucks in the dregs of each corrupted state."

Here is Oldham's portrait of the parasite from Paris:

"Flippant of talk, and voluble of tongue,  
With words at will, no lawyer better hung;  
Softer than flattering court parasite,  
Or city trader when he means to cheat.  
No calling or profession comes amiss:  
A needy monsieur can be what he please—  
Groom, page, valet, quack, operator, fencer,  
Perfumer, pimp, jack-pudding, juggler, dancer."

Place this passage beside that of Johnson's "London," beginning with

“Studious to please, and ready to submit,  
The supple Gaul was born a parasite,”

and it will be seen that the two poets painted their “fasting monsieur” in precisely the same colors.

Oldham’s “Satire upon a Woman who by her Falsehood was the Death of My Friend” seems to have furnished Byron with a model for the lampoon upon another woman which he entitled “A Sketch.” Both begin with a recital of the misdeeds of the person satirized, and end with the fiercest maledictions: those of Oldham are, if possible, the more violent. He prays that the woman whose inconstancy caused her friend’s death may be

“Plagued so, till she think damning a release,  
And humbly pray to go to hell for ease.”

I have mentioned Swift as a borrower from Oldham. There is but one couplet to which I could point in support of my assertion, taken almost word for word from the earlier poet—and that I do not care to quote.

I have quoted the more liberally from the writings of this author because they are not easily come at, and because I supposed that most of my readers might desire to see what I have to say of him illustrated, as I proceeded, by passages from his poems. From the samples which I have given, I think they will infer that, although Oldham in his lifetime achieved his fame by what he wrote as a satirist, his principal talent as a poet was not for satire. His odes show that he possessed a genuine poetic enthusiasm, which appears through all his negligence of versification and diction, and often finds expression in majestic imagery and flowing numbers. He is no artist in his vocation. Dryden is our witness that he had not well learned “the numbers of his native tongue.” He has none of those happy turns of thought and expression which the practiced and expert author attains by skilful search or resolute waiting: what he has, came to him in the glow of rapid composition; and these so often that few poets can boast



of so illustrious a train of imitators. His rhymes are marvelously bad: indeed, it is often amusing to see what distant resemblances of sound he is content to accept as substitutes for rhymes. Yet he has nothing worse than the cockney rhyme in Leigh Hunt's "Feast of the Poets":

"And tother some rhymes he had made on a straw,  
Showing how he had found it, and what it was for."

Dr. Johnson thought so well of Oldham that he at one time projected an edition of his writings, with a biography and notes. The earlier editions contain some pieces of an indelicate character; but in the later ones these are omitted. It is, perhaps, hardly to be expected that another edition will be published, so many are the passages in the *Satires* disfigured by the coarse taste of the age in which Oldham lived.\*

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\* Mr. Bryant at one time contemplated a work on the less known British poets, of whom he became very fond in his old age, but which, unfortunately, beyond these references to Oldham and Cowley, he did not complete. It would doubtless have contained the names of Wyatt, Surrey, Donne, Vaughan, Shelton, Withers, Suckling, Daniel, Drayton, Herbert, Herrick, Crashawe, Marvell, Waller, and others. What an entertaining book might still be written of these more than half-forgotten worthies if it should be made to contain something of their lives as well as of their works!—ED.

ABRAHAM COWLEY.\*

“WHO now reads Cowley?” was the question asked by Alexander Pope seventy years after Abraham Cowley died—

“Who now reads Cowley? if he pleases yet,  
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit;  
Forgot his epic, nay, Pindaric art,  
But still I love the language of his heart.”

And yet even after Pope's time there were a few who still read the elder poet. Among them was Cowper, who, in the "Task," published more than a hundred years after Cowley's death, speaking of his own residence in the country, says:

“There too enamored of the life I loved  
 . . . . .  
 I studied, prized, and wished that I had known  
 Ingenious Cowley.”

At present there are doubtless fewer who read Cowley than there were in the time of Pope, although now and then we hear of some one who, with Charles Lamb, is willing to speak of Cowley as an author "very dear" to him, "though now out of fashion."

None the less, he was at one time placed at the head of poetical celebrities. The memoir of his life by Sprat, which

\* From the "North American Review" of May, 1877.

is very agreeably written, after saying that his body was buried in Westminster Abbey, adds: "It lies near the ashes of Chaucer and Spenser, the two most famous English poets of former times. But whosoever would do him right should not only equal him to the principal ancient writers of our own nation, but should also rank his name among the authors of the true antiquity, the best of the Greeks and Romans." Evelyn, to whom Cowley addressed his charming poem entitled "The Garden," speaks of him in his Diary—I quote from memory—as "that excellent man and incomparable poet." Sir John Denham, in some lines on Cowley's death, ranks him with Virgil, Horace, and Pindar.

In very early life Cowley was remarkable for his acquisitions as a scholar, and the maturity of his talent for poetry. He was born in 1618, and in little more than twelve years afterward a volume of his poetical compositions was published, some of which are probably the finest that ever were written at that age in the English language. In his "Discourses by Way of Essays in Prose and Verse," speaking of his love of retirement and study, he remarks that, while a very young boy at school, his great delight was to walk in the fields with a book or some companion. "That I was then," he says, "of the same mind as I am now—which, I confess, I wonder at myself—may appear from the latter end of an ode which I made when I was but thirteen years old, and which was then printed with many other verses. The beginning of it was boyish, but of this part which I here set down, if a very little were corrected, I should hardly now be much ashamed:

"This only grant me, that my means may lie  
Too low for envy, for contempt too high.  
Some honor I would have,  
Not from great deeds, but good alone.  
The unknown are better than ill known;  
Rumor can ope the grave.  
Acquaintance I would have, but when 't depends  
Not on the number but the choice of friends.

“Books should, not business, entertain the light,  
 And sleep, as undisturbed as death, the night.  
     My house a cottage more  
 Than palace, and should fitting be,  
 For all my life, no luxury ;  
     My garden painted o’er  
 With nature’s hand, not art’s, and pleasures yield  
 Horace might envy in his Sabine field.

“Thus would I double my life’s fading space,  
 For he that runs it well twice runs his race,  
     And in this true delight,  
 These unbought sports, that happy state,  
 I would not fear, nor wish my fate,  
     But boldly say each night,  
 To-morrow let my sun his beams display  
 Or in clouds hide them, I have lived to-day.”

He then proceeds to relate how he became smitten with the love of poetry. There was wont to lie in his mother’s parlor, “I know not,” he says, “by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion—but there was wont to lie Spenser’s works ; this I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of knights and giants and monsters and brave houses, which I found everywhere there—though my understanding had little to do with all this—and, by degrees, with the tinkling of the rhyme and dance of the numbers, so that I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and thus became a poet.”

One of the poems comprised in the early collection of which I have spoken was “The Tragical History of Pyramus and Thisbe,” in thirty-five stanzas of six lines each, written, as he himself states, when he was but ten years old. Here is a sample—the opening lines :

“When Babylon’s high walls erected were,  
     By mighty Ninus’ wife ; two houses joined,  
 One Thisbé lived in ; Pyramus the fair  
 In the other. Earth ne’er boasted such a pair.



The very senseless walls themselves combined,  
And grew in one, just like their masters' mind.

"Thisbe all other women did excel ;  
The Queen of Love less lovely was than she ;  
And Pyramus more sweet than tongue can tell.  
Nature grew proud in framing them so well,  
But Venus, envying they so fair should be,  
Bids her son Cupid shew his cruelty."

Of course, we should not look in this poem for any of Cowley's best verses, nor yet in the longer poem of "Constantia and Philetus," written two years later. He was little more than a stripling when he wrote what we have of his epic, the "Davideis," of which he only finished four books, a third of the projected number. He was then, as he told Sprat, "a young student at Cambridge." It is tedious as a narrative, but it exemplifies the character given of his poetry by Cowper. He is everywhere ingenious, if not poetical, and everywhere learned.

In the third book of the "Davideis," Cowley describes the two daughters of Saul—Merab and Michal—in lines which seem to have kindled the imagination of Walter Scott, since in his "Pirate" he has taken very nearly the same characteristics for the contrasted portraitures of the two daughters of Magnus Troil—Minna and Brenda. The reader may, perhaps, find some entertainment in comparing the parallel passages. Here are the lines of Cowley :

"Like two bright eyes in a fair body placed,  
Saul's royal house two beauteous daughters graced,  
Merab the first, Michal the younger named,  
Both equally for different glories famed.  
Merab with spacious beauty filled the sight,  
But too much awe chastised the bold delight.  
Like a calm sea which to the enlarged view  
Gives pleasure, but gives fear and reverence too,  
Michal's sweet looks, clear and free joys did move,

And no less strong, yet much more gentle love.  
Like virtuous kings whom men rejoice to obey,  
Tyrants themselves less absolute than they.  
Merab appeared like some fair princely tower,  
Michal some virgin queen's delicious bower.  
All beauty's stores in little and in great,  
But the contracted beams shot fiercest heat.  
A clear and lively brown was Merab's dye,  
Such as the prouder colors might envy;  
Michal's pure skin shone with such taintless white  
As scattered the weak rays of human sight.  
Her lips and cheeks a nobler red did shew  
Than e'er on fruits and flowers heaven's pencil drew.  
From Merab's eyes fierce and quick lightning came,  
From Michal's the sun's mild yet active flame.  
Merab's long hair was glossy chestnut-brown,  
Tresses of palest gold did Michal crown.  
Such was their outward form, and one might find  
A difference not unlike it in the mind.  
Merab with comely majesty and state  
Bore high the advantage of her worth and fate.  
Such humble sweetness did soft Michal show,  
That none who reach so high e'er stooped so low  
Merab rejoiced in her racked lovers' pain,  
And fortified her virtue with disdain.  
The grief she caused gave gentle Michal grief;  
She wished her beauties less for their relief,  
Even to her captives civil; yet the excess  
Of naked virtue guarded her no less.  
Business and power Merab's large thought did vex,  
Her wit disdained the fetters of her sex.  
Michal no less disdained affairs and noise,  
Yet did it not from ignorance but choice.  
In brief, both copies were more sweetly drawn,  
Merab of Saul, Michal of Jonathan."

In Scott's romance we have this counterpart of the picture of Merab and Michal:

“From her mother Minna inherited the stately form and dark eyes, the raven locks, and finely pencilled brows which showed that she was on one side at least a stranger to the blood of Thulè. Her cheek—

‘O, call it fair, not pale!’—

was so slightly and delicately tinged with the rose that many thought the lily had an undue proportion in her complexion. But in that predominance of the paler flower there was nothing sickly or languid; it was the natural color of health, and corresponded in a peculiar degree with features which seemed calculated to express a contemplative and high-minded character. When Minna Troil heard a tale of woe or of injustice, it was then her blood rushed to her cheeks, and showed how warm it beat, notwithstanding the generally serious, composed, and retiring disposition which her countenance and demeanor seemed to exhibit. If strangers sometimes conceived that her fine features were clouded by melancholy for which her age and situation could scarce have given occasion, they were soon satisfied, upon further acquaintance, that the placid mild quietude of her disposition, and the mental energy of a character which was but little interested in ordinary and trivial occurrences, was the real cause of her gravity; and most men, when they knew that her melancholy had no ground in real sorrow, and was only the aspiration of a soul bent upon more important objects than those by which she was surrounded, might have wished her whatever could add to her happiness, but could scarce have desired that, graceful as she was in her natural and unaffected seriousness, she should change that deportment for one more gay. In short, notwithstanding our wish to have avoided that hackneyed simile of an angel, there was something in the serious beauty of her aspect, in the measured yet graceful ease of her motions, in the music of her voice and the serene purity of her eye, that seemed as if Minna Troil belonged naturally to some higher and better sphere, and was only the chance visitant of a world that was not worthy of her.

“The scarcely less beautiful, equally lovely, and equally innocent Brenda was of a complexion as differing from her sister as they differed in character, taste, and expression. Her profuse locks were of that paly brown which receives from the passing sunbeam a tinge of gold, but darkens again when the ray has passed from it. Her eye, her mouth, the beautiful row of teeth which in her innocent

vivacity were frequently disclosed, the fresh yet not too bright glow of a healthy complexion, tingeing a skin like the drifted snow, spoke her genuine Scandinavian descent. A fairy form, less tall than that of Minna, but still more finely moulded into symmetry, a careless and almost childish lightness of step, an eye that seemed to look on every object with pleasure, from a natural and serene cheerfulness of disposition, attracted even more general admiration than the charms of her sister, though, perhaps, that which Minna did excite might be of a more intense as well as of a more reverential character.

"The dispositions of these lovely sisters were not less different than their complexions. In the kindly affections neither could be said to excel the other. But the cheerfulness of Brenda mixed itself with the every-day business of life, and seemed inexhaustible in its profusion. The less buoyant spirit of her sister appeared to bring to society a contented wish to be interested and pleased with what was going forward, but was rather placidly carried along by the stream of mirth and pleasure than disposed to aid its progress by any effort of her own. She endured mirth, rather than enjoyed it, and the pleasures in which she most delighted were those of a graver and more solitary cast."

This portraiture is somewhat modified from Cowley's original, but the main features are the same.

In these days we can hardly expect that anybody should read the "*Davideis*" save those who are attracted by what Cowper calls the ingenuity of its author—his dexterity in stringing upon the slight thread of his narrative unexpected thoughts and remote allusions, never rejecting them because they are odd or grotesque, provided they are ingenious. But the poem contains one beautiful lyric, a serenade in the shape of a love-song, supposed to have been sung by the enamored shepherd youth, David, under the window of Michal, the daughter of Saul. It is happily versified, and the fire and enthusiasm of the initial stanzas contrast finely with the plain-tiveness of the close. Appearing among the rugged numbers of the third book of the "*Davideis*," it scarcely seems as if it belonged there.



“Awake, awake, my Lyre,  
And tell thy silent master’s humble tale  
In sounds that may prevail,  
Sounds that gentle thoughts inspire.  
Though so exalted she  
And I so lowly be,  
Tell her such different notes make all thy harmony.

“Hark, how the strings awake !  
And though the moving hand approach not near,  
Themselves with awful fear  
A kind of numerous trembling make.  
Now all thy forces try ;  
Now all thy charms apply ;  
Revenge upon her ear the conquests of her eye.

“Weak Lyre, thy virtue sure  
Is useless here, since thou art only found  
To cure, but not to wound,  
And she to wound, but not to cure.  
Too weak, too well thou prove  
My passion to remove.  
Physic to other ills, thou’rt nourishment to love.

“Sleep, sleep again, my Lyre,  
For thou canst never tell my humble tale  
In sounds that may prevail,  
Nor gentle thoughts in her inspi  
All thy vain mirth lay by ;  
Bid thy strings silent lie.  
Sleep, sleep again, my Lyre, and let thy master die.”

The Pindaric Odes of Cowley are read with more pleasure than the “Davideis.” In the epic, the reader, following the progress of the narrative, is continually stopped by conceits, and loses patience; in the odes, the conceits entertain him. It is not improbable that the poet perceived how unsuited his manner of treatment was to a narrative poem, and therefore

desisted from proceeding with it, although he took the pains to write over the first book of the "Davideis" in Latin verse, which he wrote with as much facility, apparently, as English. It seems a curious circumstance that we find among these an ode entitled "Brutus," beginning thus :

"Excellent Brutus ! of all human race  
The best, till nature was improved by grace."

The poet then proceeds to applaud the tyrannicide for putting to death the destroyer of his country's liberties. We should hardly have expected this from a partisan of Charles I, and a follower of his son. The extravagance of the school of poets to which Cowley belonged is strikingly illustrated in the "Ode to Dr. Scarborough," in which, after dwelling upon the slaughter and desolation caused by the civil war, he says :

"But thou by heaven wert sent  
This desolation to prevent,  
A medicine and a counter-poison to the age.  
Scarce could the sword despatch more to the grave  
Than thou didst save  
By wondrous art and by successful care ;  
The ruins of a civil war thou dost alone repair.  
.  
The subtle ague that for sureness' sake  
Takes its own times the assault to make,  
And at each battery the whole fort doth shake,  
When thy strong guards and work it spies,  
Trembles for itself and flies.  
The cruel stone, that restless pain,  
That's sometimes rolled away in vain,  
But still, like Sisypheus's stone, returns again,  
Thou break'st and meltest by learned juices' force ;  
A greater work, though short the way appear,  
Than Hannibal's by vinegar.  
Oppressed nature's necessary course  
It stops in vain ; like Moses thou  
Strik'st the dry rock, and straight the waters freely flow.

Perhaps it is not necessary to give here any quotations from Cowley's translations of Anacreon, inasmuch as even those who never read anything else that he has written are familiar with the most felicitous of these—the "Ode to the Grasshopper." They are but few in number—eleven in all—but they surpass the Greek originals. They are sprightly, joyous, seemingly poured forth by one who writes verses because he cannot help it, and they are free from the ruggedness of versification which Cowley rarely took pains to avoid. He styles them "Some Copies of Verses translated paraphrastically out of Anacreon," but there is little dilution, and what he has amplified he has made more sprightly.

The forty-four poems included under the title of "The Mistress" have little to recommend them save the ingenuity of which Cowper speaks. Their subject is love, and they pursue the metaphors employed by poets to describe that passion until they may be said to be fairly run down in the chase. There is much skill shown in this exercise of art, and there is no lack of learning, but there is no emotion. If all Cowley's poetry had been such, the neglect of which Pope speaks would have been fully deserved.

In the "Verses written on Several Occasions," and in the "Discourses by Way of Essays in Verse and Prose," are some of Cowley's best things. Among these is "The Complaint," of which Dr. Johnson speaks in a tone of derision, yet it is really a beautiful poem. In none of Cowley's poems is the thought nobler, the versification more harmonious, and the expression more free, or, if we except the phrase "melancholy Cowley," more dignified. It has the interest of being a record of the poet's personal history; the author is in earnest, and expresses himself the more naturally and impressively because with feeling. The poem takes the form of a dialogue between the poet and his Muse. She reproaches him with quitting her service for the chances of preferment at court, where he found nothing but disappointment.

"Go, renegado ! cast up thy account,  
     And see to what amount  
     Thy foolish gains in quitting me :  
 The sale of knowledge, fame, and liberty,  
 The fruits of thy unlearned apostasy.  
 Thou thought'st if once the public storm were past  
 All thy remaining life should sunshine be.  
 Behold the public storm is spent at last ;  
 The sovereign is tossed at sea no more,  
 And thou, with all the noble company,  
     Art got at last to shore.  
 But while thy fellow-voyagers I see  
 All marched up to possess the promised land,  
 Thou still alone, alas ! dost gaping stand  
 Upon the naked beach, upon the barren sand."

Cowley listens to this reproach, and thus retorts the censure :

"Ah, wanton foe ! dost thou upbraid  
     The ills which thou thyself hast made ?  
 When in the cradle innocent I lay,  
 Thou, wicked spirit, stolest me away,  
     And my abuséd soul didst bear  
 Into thy new-found worlds, I know not where,  
     Thy golden Indies in the air.  
     . . . . .  
 There is a sort of stubborn weeds,  
 Which if the earth but once it ever breeds,  
     No wholesome herb can near them thrive,  
     Nor useful plant can keep alive.  
 The foolish sports I did on thee bestow  
 Make all my art and labor useless now,  
 Where once such fairies dance no grass can ever grow."

On the whole, therefore, "The Complaint" resolves itself into a very satisfactory way of accounting for the neglect of the court to reward Cowley's attachment to the royal cause during the whole period of the civil war and the reign of



Cromwell. He had tastes and occupations which unfitted him for being a courtier, and he acknowledges that he had no reason to expect any other treatment than to be passed by in favor of those who were recommended by other qualities of character. In this I see nothing unmanly or mean-spirited. We may regard the poem as a skilful setting forth of the claims of learning, genius, and virtue to the favor of the prince, and as the intimation of a resolution not to obtain it by unworthy arts.

Cowley loved to celebrate in verse the genius and virtues of the great men who, in his time, appeared on the stage of the world and passed away. One of his poems is "On the Death of Anthony Vandyke, the Famous Painter," in which the following characteristic passage occurs :

"His all-resembling pencil did outpass  
The mimic imagery of looking-glass.  
Nor was his life less perfect than his art ;  
Nor was his hand less erring than his heart.  
There was no false or fading color there,  
The figures sweet and well-proportioned were.  
Most other men, set next to him in view,  
Appeared more shadows than the men he drew.  
Thus still he lived till heaven did for him call,  
Where reverend Luke salutes him first of all,  
Where he beholds new sights divinely fair,  
And could almost wish for his pencil there."

Another poem is "On the Death of Mr. Crashaw," author of "Steps to the Temple," beginning thus finely :

"Poet and Saint, to thee alone are given  
The two most sacred names of earth and heaven.  
Ah, wretched we, poets of earth, but thou  
Wert living the same poet which thou'rt now."

Crashaw became a Catholic, and was made a canon of the church at Loretto. Cowley says :

"Pardon, my mother Church, if I consent  
 That angels led him, when from thee he went,  
 For even in error sure no danger is,  
 When joined with so much piety as his.  
 Ah, mighty God !—with shame I speak and grief—  
 Ah, that our greatest faults were in belief,  
 And our weak reason were even weaker yet,  
 Rather than thus our wills too strong for it.  
 His faith, perhaps, in some nice tenets might  
 Be wrong ; his life, I'm sure, was in the right."

He celebrated the discovery of the circulation of the blood by his contemporary Harvey, of whom he speaks as one who made all the organs of the human frame bring an hourly account of their doings, and surveying their tasks with as much exactness

"As if he hired the workers by the day."

He lamented the death of Sir Henry Wotton, the diplomatist and poet, in an elegy containing the famous couplet :

"So many languages had he in store,  
 That only fame could speak of him in more."

One of his poems has for its occasion the death of Mrs. Catherine Philips, the poetess, styled on the title-page of her works, published after her death, "the matchless Orinda." Of her writings, now forgotten, he says that they will long survive his praise of them, and thus celebrates her personal excellences :

"Never did spirit of the manly make,  
 And dipped all o'er in learning's sacred lake,  
 A temper more invulnerable take.  
 No violent passion could an entrance find  
 Into the tender goodness of her mind.  
 Through walls of stone those furious bullets may  
 Force their impetuous way ;  
 When her soft breast they struck, powerless and dead they lay.

How little of a courtier Cowley was may be fairly inferred from this, that he never abused his talent for panegyric to the praise of any of those dissolute wretches by whom Charles II surrounded himself. He reserved his commendations for what he esteemed real worth, and it is no wonder, therefore, that he failed to find favor with such a court. One of the most pleasing of his poems is that entitled "The Garden," addressed to Evelyn, the tree-fancier, and author of the "Sylva," between whom and himself there existed a strong friendship, arising, probably, from conformity of tastes and similarity of character. This poem has the quality which gives interest to "The Complaint." The author is in earnest, and, instead of elaborately toying with his subject and casting about for unexpected illustrations, expresses with warmth the thoughts that come crowding upon his mind when a country life is mentioned such as his friend Evelyn enjoyed at Say's Court. Cowley's love of such a life, whatever Dr. Johnson may have said, was most sincere and hearty. His early writings show that it was a passion with him in his youth; his "Discourses in Verse and Prose" give us the idea of one who was contented in his retirement, and one of his most elaborate and finished works is a Latin poem "On Plants," in six books, the fruit of his researches as a physician and cultivator—a poem turned into indifferent English verse soon after his death by N. Tate, the notorious Aphra Behn, and others. Dr. Johnson, to make it appear that Cowley was not happy in his retirement in Chertsey, where he passed the two closing years of his life, quotes and commends to the consideration of "those who pant for solitude" a letter from him to Sprat, written soon after his rustication, in which he complains that he had caught cold, had bruised his ribs with a fall, could not get money from his tenants, and had his meadows eaten up at night by cattle turned in by his neighbors. A cold, Dr. Johnson might have reflected, can be caught anywhere. As to the fall, I knew a person who fell last winter in a crowded street of New York and bruised his shoulder, which is not quite well yet. I know

several places in the country where tenants pay their rents punctually, and where people do not turn their cattle into their neighbors' meadows to eat the grass by night. So that, on the whole, Dr. Johnson scarcely makes out a case against a country life by the help of Cowley's letter. Johnson had not a single rural taste, and hated a country life with all his heart.

There are yet several of Cowley's poems deserving of special remark, as illustrative of his genius. Such is the "Ode on Wit," a series of just critical precepts delivered in verse; the "Hymn to the Light," in which there are some noble stanzas; and that sprightly trifle "The Chronicle," the best of Cowley's love-poems. Whatever may be the merit of any of his different poems, the reader finds in none of them any stain of that grossness which in the latter part of Cowley's life, after Charles II brought his ribald court into England, had become fashionable. Everything which he wrote has a certain expression of the purity of his own character. I have sometimes wondered how it has happened that in the reprinting of old English authors it has never occurred to any publisher to give the public a reprint, by themselves, of the "Discourses in Verse and Prose." The prose of this neglected author is as graceful and natural as his poetry is ingenious, and bears witness to the largeness of his reading and the extent of his knowledge.

About four or five years after the restoration of the Stuarts, Cowley withdrew into the country. On this occasion he composed the little Latin ode entitled "Epitaphium vivi Auctoris," the choice Latinity of which contrasts singularly with the modern subtlety and quaintness of the thought.

"Hic, O Viator, sub Lare parvulo,  
Couleius hic est conditus. Hic jacet  
Defunctus humani laboris  
Sorte, supervacuâque vitâ.

"Non indecorâ pauperie nitens,  
Et non inerti nobilis otio,  
Vanoque delectis popello  
Divitiis animosus hastis.



“Possis ut illum dicere mortuum  
 En terra nunc jam quantula sufficit ;  
 Exempta sit curis, Viator,  
 Terra sit illa levis, precare.

“Hic sparge flores ; sparge breves rosas,  
 Nam vita gaudet mortua floribus ;  
 Herbisque odoratis corona  
 Vatis adhuc cinerem calentem.”

The task of translating such lines is not easy, but here is an attempt to put the thought into English verse :

“THE LIVING AUTHOR’S EPITAPH.

“Here, Stranger, in this lowly spot  
 The buried Cowley finds, at last,  
 Rest from the labors of his lot,  
 And leaves life’s follies with the past.

“In not unseemly low estate,  
 Nor meanly slothful, though retired,  
 Well hath the poet learned to hate  
 The wealth by staring crowds admired.

“Yea, speak of him as dead ; for see  
 How little earth is now his share ;  
 And, Stranger, pray that light may be  
 Its burden, and may bring no care.

“Strew flowers ; they please the living dead ;  
 Here roses ere they wither strew,  
 And o’er his yet warm ashes shed  
 The sweetest-smelling herbs that grow.”

Cowley did not wisely choose the place of his retreat. Sprat says that, “out of haste to be gone away from the noise and tumult of the city, he had not prepared so healthful a situation in the country as he might have done had he made a more leisurable choice.” This haste was the cause of

his death. In the heat of summer, according to Sprat, by staying too long among the meadows, he was seized with what that author calls "a violent defluxion and stoppage in the breast and throat." This, after a fortnight, carried him off, in the forty-ninth year of his age, and in the year 1667—seven years after the restoration of the royal line to whose cause he had attached himself, but from which he never received any acknowledgment of his fidelity, save the remark made when he died by Charles II, that he had not left a better man behind him in England, which was probably the truth.

Cowley's verses have few strains of poetic enthusiasm, and are never pathetic. These are not qualities of poetry which in his day were in fashion. He gave what the age demanded—sometimes just and often fanciful resemblances and oppositions of images and thoughts, and he had his reward in being ranked as a poet by his contemporaries above all others of his time. That he is no longer read is not surprising. Of the old authors in our language few are now read, save by persons of peculiar tastes and habits of study, and the proportion of these to the rest of the population is, I fear, gradually becoming less. Poets of greater genius than Cowley are neglected by the mass of readers. Books have multiplied of late to such an extent that whoever reads all the new ones which possess a certain degree of merit has hardly time for anything else, and in this way ignorance of the older literature of our language is becoming more common from year to year. Many persons of considerable reading appear as if they had scarcely even heard of any author who wrote before the year 1800. The prospect is not encouraging for contemporary men of genius, who aspire to live in the memory and admiration of succeeding ages. Will it happen that they too shall be forgotten? Will the years to come, like waves rolling up a sandy beach, efface their footprints in sweeping over them? Must the volumes which contain their writings be left to gather dust on the shelves of old libraries, scarce ever opened

and never reprinted, while newer books engage the universal attention?

In looking over Cowley's poems, I have found some instances in which Pope borrowed from him without acknowledgment. It is hardly to be supposed that an author of such large original resources as Pope should do this purposely. It might be that he did it unconsciously. Here is one example. Cowley, in the "Davideis," says of the Messiah:

"Round the whole earth his dreaded name shall sound,  
And reach to worlds that must not yet be found."

Pope, in the "Essay on Criticism," says of the poets of Greece and Rome:

"Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,  
And worlds applaud that must not yet be found."

Cowley, in a paraphrase of one of Horace's Epodes, says:

"Nor does the roughest season of the sky  
Or sullen Jove all sports to him deny.  
He runs the mazes of the nimble hare;  
His well-mouthed dogs' glad concert rends the air."

These lines appear in Pope's "Windsor Forest" thus modified:

"Nor yet, when moist Arcturus clouds the sky,  
The woods and fields their pleasing toils deny;  
To plains with well-breathed beagles we repair,  
And trace the mazes of the circling hare."

But Cowley is so opulent that he can well afford to lend, and I close by assuring the reader that if he will look over Cowley's poems he will find much that, if that sort of appropriation is ever permissible, is well worth borrowing.

## POETS AND POETRY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.\*

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I HAVE known persons who frankly said that they took no pleasure in reading poetry, and perhaps the number of those who make this admission would be greater were it not for the fear of appearing singular. But to the great mass of mankind poetry is really a delight and a refreshment. To many, perhaps to most, it is not requisite that it should be of the highest degree of merit. Nor, although it be true that the poems which are most famous and most highly prized are works of considerable length, can it be said that the pleasure they give is in any degree proportionate to the extent of their plan. It seems to me that it is only poems of a moderate length, or else parts of the greater works to which I refer, that produce the effect upon the mind and heart which make the charm of this kind of writing. The proper office of poetry, in filling the mind with delightful images and awakening the gentler emotions, is not accomplished on a first and rapid perusal, but requires that the words should be dwelt upon until they become in a certain sense our own, and are adopted as the utterance of our own minds. A collection such as this is in-

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\* From an Introduction to "A New Library of Poetry and Song. W. C. Bryant, editor. Fords, Howard & Hurlbut. New York, 1876." This was written before the article on Cowley, just given, but it seems better fitted, by its general character, to close this selection from the author's literary essays.



tended to be furnishes for this purpose samples of the best English verse suited to any of the varying moods of its readers.

Such a work also, if sufficiently extensive, gives the reader an opportunity of comparing the poetic literature of one period with that of another; of noting the fluctuations of taste, and how the poetic forms which are in fashion during one age are laid aside in the next; of observing the changes which take place in our language, and the sentiments which at different periods challenge the public approbation. Specimens of the poetry of different centuries presented in this way show how the great stream of human thought in its poetic form eddies now to the right and now to the left, wearing away its banks first on one side and then on the other. Some author of more than common faculties and more than common boldness catches the public attention, and immediately he has a crowd of followers who form their taste on his and seek to divide with him the praise. Thus Cowley, with his undeniable genius, was the head of a numerous class who made poetry consist in far-fetched conceits, ideas oddly brought together, and quaint turns of thought. Pope, following close upon Dryden, and learning much from him, was the founder of a school of longer duration, which found its models in Boileau and other poets of the reign of Louis XIV—a school in which the wit predominated over the poetry—a school marked by striking oppositions of thought, frequent happiness of expression, and a carefully balanced modulation—numbers pleasing at first, but in the end fatiguing. As this school degenerated, the wit almost disappeared, but there was no new infusion of poetry in its place. When Scott gave the public the “*Lay of the Last Minstrel*,” and other poems, which certainly, considered as mere narratives, are the best we have, carrying the reader forward without weariness, and with an interest which the author never allows to subside, a crowd of imitators pressed after him, the greater part of whom are no longer read. Wordsworth had, and still has, his school; the stamp

of his example is visible on the writings of all the poets of the present day. Even Byron showed himself, in the third canto of "*Childe Harold*," to be one of his disciples, though he fiercely resented being called so. The same poet did not disdain to learn of Scott in composing his narrative poems, such as the "*Bride of Abydos*" and the "*Giaour*," though he could never tell a story in verse without occasional tediousness. In our day the style of writing adopted by eminent living poets is often seen reflected in the verses of their younger contemporaries—sometimes with an effect like that of a face beheld in a tarnished mirror. Thus it is that poets are formed by their influence on one another; the greatest of them are more or less indebted for what they are to their predecessors and their contemporaries.

While speaking of these changes in the public taste, I am tempted to caution the reader against the mistake often made of estimating the merit of one poet by the too easy process of comparing him with another. The varieties of poetic excellence are as great as the varieties of beauty in flowers or in the female face. There is no poet, indeed no author in any department of literature, who can be taken as a standard in judging of others; the true standard is an ideal one, and even this is not the same in all men's minds. One delights in grace, another in strength; one in a fiery vehemence and enthusiasm on the surface, another in majestic repose and the expression of feeling too deep to be noisy; one loves simple and obvious images strikingly employed, or familiar thoughts placed in a new light, another is satisfied only with novelties of thought and expression, with uncommon illustrations and images far sought. It is certain that each of these modes of treating a subject may have its peculiar merit, and that it is absurd to require of those whose genius inclines them to one that they should adopt its opposite, or to set one down as inferior to another because he is not of the same class. As well, in looking through an astronomer's telescope at that beautiful phenomenon, a double star, in which the twin flames are one of a ro-

seate and the other of a golden tint, might we quarrel with either of them because it is not colored like its fellow. Some of the comparisons made by critics between one poet and another are scarcely less preposterous than would be a comparison between a river and a mountain.

The compiler of this collection has gone as far back as to the author who may properly be called the father of English poetry, and who wrote while our language was like the lion in Milton's account of the creation, when rising from the earth at the Divine command and

“ . . . . pawing to get free  
His hinder parts,”

for it was still clogged by the unassimilated remains of the French tongue, to which in part it owed its origin. These were to be thrown aside in after years. The versification had also one characteristic of French verse which was, soon after Chaucer's time, laid aside—the mute or final *e* had in his lines the value of a syllable by itself, especially when the next word began with a consonant. But, though these peculiarities somewhat embarrass the reader, he still finds in the writings of the old poet a fund of the good old English of the Saxon fireside, which makes them worthy to be studied were it only to strengthen our hold on our language. He delighted in describing natural objects which still retained their Saxon names, and this he did with great beauty and sweetness. In the sentiments, also, the critics ascribe to him a degree of delicacy which one could scarcely have looked for in the age in which he wrote, though at other times he avails himself of the license then allowed. There is no majesty, no stately march of numbers, in his poetry, still less is there of fire, rapidity, or conciseness; the French and Italian narrative poets, from whom he learned his art, wrote as if the people of their time had nothing to do but to attend to long stories, and Chaucer, who translated from the French the “Romaunt of the Rose,” though a greater poet than any of those whom he took for his

models, made small improvement upon them in this respect. His "Troilus and Cryseyde," with but little action and incident, is as long as either of the epics of Homer. The "Canterbury Tales," Chaucer's best things, have less of this defect; but even there the narrative is over-minute, and the personages, as Taine, the French critic, remarks, although they talk well, talk too much. The taste for this prolixity in narratives and conversations had a long duration in English poetry, since we find the same tediousness, to call it by its true name, in Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis" and his "Lucrece," written more than two hundred years later. Yet in the mean time the old popular ballads of England and Scotland had been composed, in which the incidents follow each other in quick succession, and the briefest possible speeches are uttered by the personages. The scholars and court poets doubtless disdained to learn anything of these poets of the people, and the "Davideis" of Cowley, who lived three hundred years after Chaucer, is as remarkable for the sluggish progress of the story and the tediousness of the harangues as for any other characteristics.

Between the time of Chaucer and that of Sidney and Spenser we find little in the poetic literature of our language to detain our attention. That age produced many obscure versifiers, and metrical romances continued to be written after the fashion of the French and Italian poets, whom Chaucer acknowledged as his masters. During this period appeared Skelton, the poet and jester, whose special talent was facility in rhyming, who rhymed as if he could not help it—as if he had only to put pen to paper, and the words leaped of their own accord into regular measure with an inevitable jingle at the endings. Meantime, our language was undergoing a process which gradually separated the nobler parts from the dross, rejecting the French additions for which there was no occasion, or which could not easily be made to take upon themselves the familiar forms of our tongue. The prosody of English became also fixed in that period; the final *e* which so



perplexes the modern reader in Chaucer's verse was no longer permitted to figure as a distinct syllable. The poets, however, still allowed themselves the liberty of sometimes making, after the French manner, two syllables of the terminations *tion* and *ion*, so that *nation* became a word of three syllables and *opinion* a word of four. The Sonnets of Sidney, written on the Italian model, have all the grace and ingenuity of those of Petrarch. In the "Faerie Queene" of Spenser it seems to me that we find the English language, so far as the purposes of poetry require, in a degree of perfection beyond which it has not been since carried, and, I suppose, never will be. A vast assemblage of poetic endowments contributed to the composition of this poem, yet I think it would not be easy to name one of the same length, and the work of a genius equally great, in any language, which more fatigues the reader in a steady perusal from beginning to end. In it we have an invention ever awake, active, and apparently inexhaustible; an affluence of imagery grand, beautiful, or magnificent, as the subject may require; wise observations on human life steeped in a poetic coloring, and not without touches of pathos; a wonderful mastery of versification, and the aptest forms of expression. We read at first with admiration, yet to this ere-long succeeds a sense of satiety, and we lay down the book, not unwilling, however, after an interval, to take it up with renewed admiration. I once heard an eminent poet say that he thought the second part of the "Faerie Queene" inferior to the first; yet I am inclined to ascribe the remark rather to a falling off in the attention of the reader than in the merit of the work. A poet, however, would be more likely to persevere to the end than any other reader, since in every stanza he would meet with some lesson in his art.

In that fortunate age of English literature arose a greater than Spenser. Let me only say of Shakespeare, that in his dramas, amid certain faults imputable to the taste of the English public, there is to be found every conceivable kind of poetic excellence. At the same time and immediately after

him flourished a group of dramatic poets who drew their inspiration from nature and wrote with manly vigor. One would naturally suppose that their example, along with the more illustrious ones of Spenser and Shakespeare, would have influenced and formed the taste of the succeeding age; but almost before they had ceased to claim the attention of the public, and while the eminent divines, Barrow, Jeremy Taylor, and others, wrote nobly in prose with a genuine eloquence and a fervor scarcely less than poetic, appeared the school of writers in verse whom Johnson, by a phrase the propriety of which has been disputed, calls the metaphysical poets—a class of wits whose whole aim was to extort admiration by ingenious conceits, thoughts of such unexpectedness and singularity that one wondered how they could ever come into the mind of the author. For what they regarded as poetic effect they depended, not upon the sense of beauty or grandeur, not upon depth or earnestness of feeling, but simply upon surprise at quaint and strange resemblances, contrasts, and combinations of ideas. These were delivered for the most part in rugged diction, and in numbers so harsh as to be almost unmanageable by the reader. Cowley, a man of real genius, and of a more musical versification than his fellows, was the most distinguished example of this school. Milton, born a little before Cowley, and, like him, an eminent poet in his teens, is almost the only instance of escape from the infection of this vicious style; his genius was of too robust a mould for such petty employments, and he would have made, if he had condescended to them, as ill a figure as his own Samson on the stage of a mountebank. Dryden himself, in some of his earlier poems, appears as a pupil of this school; but he soon outgrew—in great part, at least—the false taste of the time, and set an example of a nobler treatment of poetic subjects.

Yet, though the genius of Dryden reacted against this perversion of the art of verse, it had not the power to raise the poetry of our language to the height which it occupied in the Elizabethan age. Within a limited range he was a true poet;

his imagination was far from fertile, nor had he much skill in awakening emotion, but he could treat certain subjects magnificently in verse, and often where his imagination fails him he is sustained by the vigor of his understanding and the largeness of his knowledge. He gave an example of versification in the heroic couplet, which has commanded the admiration of succeeding poets down to our time—a versification manly, majestic, and of varied modulation, of which Pope took only a certain part as the model of his own, and, contracting its range and reducing it to more regular pauses, made it at first appear more musical to the reader, but in the end fatigued him by its monotony. Dryden drew scarcely a single image from his own observation of external nature; and Pope, though less insensible than he to natural beauty, was still merely the poet of the drawing-room. Yet he is the author of more happy lines, which have passed into the common speech and are quoted as proverbial sayings, than any author we have save Shakespeare; and, whatever may be said in his dispraise, he is likely to be quoted as long as the English is a living language. The footprints of Pope are not those of a giant, but he has left them scattered all over the field of our literature, although the fashion of writing like him has wholly passed away.

Certain faculties of the poetic mind seem to have slumbered from the time of Milton to that of Thomson, who showed the literary world of Great Britain, to its astonishment, what a profusion of materials for poetry Nature offers to him who directly consults her instead of taking his images at second-hand. Thomson's blank verse, however, is often swollen and bladdery to a painful degree. He seems to have imagined, like many other writers of his time, that blank verse could not support itself without the aid of a stilted phraseology; for that fine poem of his, in the Spenserian stanza, the "Castle of Indolence," shows that when he wrote in rhyme he did not think it necessary to depart from a natural style.

Wordsworth is generally spoken of as one who gave to

our literature that impulse which brought the poets back from the capricious forms of expression in vogue before his time to a certain fearless simplicity; for it must be acknowledged that until he arose there was scarce any English poet who did not seem in some degree to labor under the apprehension of becoming too simple and natural—to imagine that a certain pomp of words is necessary to elevate the style and make that grand and noble which in its direct expression would be homely and trivial. Yet the poetry of Wordsworth was but the consummation of a tendency already existing and active. Cowper had already felt it in writing his “Task,” and in his longer rhymed poems had not only attempted a freer versification than that of Pope, but had clothed his thoughts in the manly English of the better age of our poetry. Percy’s “Reliques” had accustomed English readers to perceive the extreme beauty of the old ballads in their absolute simplicity, and shown how much superior these were to such productions as Percy’s own “Hermit of Warkworth” and Goldsmith’s “Edwin and Angelina,” in their feeble elegance. Burns’s inimitable Scottish poems—his English verses are tumid and wordy—had taught the same lesson. We may infer that the genius of Wordsworth was in a great degree influenced by these, just as he in his turn contributed to form the taste of those who wrote after him. It was long, however, before he reached the eminence which he now holds in the estimation of the literary world. His “Lyrical Ballads,” published about the close of the last century, were at first little read, and of those who liked them there were few who were not afraid to express their admiration. Yet his fame has slowly climbed from stage to stage until now his influence is perceived in all the English poetry of the day. If this were the place to criticise his poetry, I should say, of his more stately poems in blank verse, that they often lack compression—that the thought suffers by too great expansion. Wordsworth was unnecessarily afraid of being epigrammatic. He abhorred what is called a point as much as Dennis is said



to have abhorred a pun. Yet I must own that even his most diffuse amplifications have in them a certain grandeur that fills the mind.

At a somewhat later period arose the poet Keats, who wrote in a manner which carried the reader back to the time when those charming passages of lyrical enthusiasm were produced which we occasionally find in the plays of Shakespeare, in those of Beaumont and Fletcher, and in Milton's "Comus." The verses of Keats are occasionally disfigured, especially in his "Endymion," by a flatness almost childish, but in the finer passages they clothe the thought in the richest imagery and in words each of which is a poem. Lowell has justly called Keats "over-languaged," but there is scarce a word that we should be willing to part with in his "Ode to the Nightingale," and that on a "Grecian Urn," and the same thing may be said of the greater part of his "Hyperion." His poems were ridiculed in the "Edinburgh Review," but they survived the ridicule, and now, fifty years after their first publication, the poetry of the present day, by certain resemblances of manner, testifies to the admiration with which he is still read.

The genius of Byron was of a more vigorous mould than that of Keats; but, notwithstanding his great popularity and the number of his imitators at one time, he made a less permanent impression on the character of English poetry. His misanthropy and gloom, his scoffing vein, and the fierceness of his animosities, after the first glow of admiration was over, had a repellent effect upon readers, and made them turn to more cheerful strains. Moore had in his time many imitators, but all his gayety, his brilliant fancy, his somewhat feminine graces, and the elaborate music of his numbers, have not saved him from the fate of being imitated no more. Coleridge and Southey were of the same school with Wordsworth, and only added to the effect of his example upon our literature. Coleridge is the author of the two most perfect poetical translations which our language in his day could boast, those of Schiller's "Piccolomini" and "Death of

Wallenstein," in which the English verse falls in no respect short of the original German. Southey divides with Scott the honor of writing the first long narrative poems in our language which can be read without occasional weariness.\*

Of the later poets, educated in part by the generation of authors which produced Wordsworth and Byron, and in part by each other, yet possessing their individual peculiarities, I should perhaps speak with more reserve. The number of those who are attempting to win a name in this walk of literature is great, and several of them have already gained, and through many years held, the public favor. To some of them will be assigned an enduring station among the eminent of their class.

There are two tendencies by which the seekers after poetic fame in our day are apt to be misled, through both the example of others and the applause of critics. One of these is the desire to extort admiration by striking novelties of expression; and the other, the ambition to distinguish themselves by subtleties of thought, remote from the common apprehension. With regard to the first of these I have only to say what has been often said before, that, however favorable may be the idea which this luxuriance of poetic imagery and of epithet at first gives us of the author's talent, our admiration soon exhausts itself. We feel that the thought moves heavily under its load of garments, some of which perhaps strike us as tawdry and others as ill-fitting, and we lay down the book to take it up no more. The other mistake, if I may so call it, deserves more attention, since we find able critics speaking with high praise of passages in the poetry of the day to which the general reader is puzzled to attach a meaning. This is often the case when the words themselves seem simple enough, and keep within the range of the Saxon or household element of our language. The obscurity lies sometimes in the phrase

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\* In conversation, Mr. Bryant once remarked that Southey, though by no means the greatest poet of his time, had yet written the greatest long poem, referring to "*Roderic*."—ED.

itself, and sometimes in the recondite or remote allusion. I will not say that certain minds are not affected by this, as others are by verses in plainer English. To the few it may be genuine poetry, although it may be a riddle to the mass of readers. I remember reading somewhere of a mathematician who was affected with a sense of sublimity by the happy solution of an algebraical or geometrical problem, and I have been assured by one who devoted himself to the science of mathematics that the phenomenon is no uncommon one. Let us beware, therefore, of assigning too narrow limits to the causes which produce the poetic exaltation of mind. The genius of those who write in this manner may be freely acknowledged, but they do not write for mankind at large.

To me it seems that one of the most important requisites for a great poet is a luminous style. The elements of poetry lie in natural objects, in the vicissitudes of human life, in the emotions of the human heart, and the relations of man to man. He who can present them in combinations and lights which at once affect the mind with a deep sense of their truth and beauty, is the poet for his own age and the ages that succeed it. It is no disparagement either to his skill or his power that he finds them near at hand; the nearer they lie to the common track of the human intelligence, the more certain is he of the sympathy of his own generation, and of those which shall come after him. The metaphysician, the subtle thinker, the dealer in abstruse speculations, whatever his skill in versification, misapplies it when he abandons the more convenient form of prose and perplexes himself with the attempt to express his ideas in poetic numbers.

Let me say for the poets of the present day, that in one important respect they have profited by the example of their immediate predecessors; they have learned to go directly to nature for their imagery, instead of taking it from what had once been regarded as the common stock of the guild of poets. I have often had occasion to verify this remark with no less delight than surprise on meeting in recent verse new images

in their untarnished luster, like coins fresh from the mint, unworn and unsoiled by passing from pocket to pocket. It is curious, also, to observe how a certain set of hackneyed phrases, which Leigh Hunt, I believe, was the first to ridicule, and which were once used for the convenience of rounding out a line or supplying a rhyme, have disappeared from our poetry, and how our blank verse in the hands of the most popular writers has dropped its stiff Latinisms and all the awkward distortions resorted to by those who thought that by putting a sentence out of its proper shape they were writing like Milton.

I have now brought this brief survey of the progress of our poetry down to the present time, and refer the reader, for samples of it in the different stages of its existence, to those which are set before him in this volume.

Such is the wide range of English verse, and such the abundance of the materials, that a compilation of this kind must be like a bouquet gathered from the fields in June, when hundreds of flowers will be left in unvisited spots, as beautiful as those which have been taken. It may happen, therefore, that many who have learned to delight in some particular poem will turn these pages, as they might those of other collections, without finding their favorite. Nor should it be matter of surprise, considering the multitude of authors from whom the compilation is made, if it be found that some are overlooked, especially the more recent, of equal merit with many whose poems appear in these pages. It may happen, also, that the compiler, in consequence of some particular association, has been sensible of a beauty and a power of awakening emotions and recalling images in certain poems which other readers will fail to perceive. It should be considered, moreover, that in poetry, as in painting, different artists have different modes of presenting their conceptions, each of which may possess its peculiar merit, yet those whose taste is formed by contemplating the productions of one class take little pleasure in any other. Crabb Robinson relates that Wordsworth



once admitted to him that he did not much admire contemporary poetry, not because of its want of poetic merit, but because he had been accustomed to poetry of a different sort, and added that but for this he might have read it with pleasure. I quote from memory. It is to be hoped that every reader of this collection, however he may have been trained, will find in the great variety of its contents something conformable to his taste.

II.

NARRATIVES.



## THE WHIRLWIND.

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WHEN I last visited the country beyond the Alleghanies, I travelled from Wheeling to Lexington on horseback, in order to contemplate more at my leisure the beautiful scenery of that interesting region. On my way I fell in with a person, also on horseback, going in the same direction, who seemed inclined to join company with me, an arrangement to which, as I had already travelled a considerable distance alone, I felt no particular aversion. He was apparently about forty-five years of age, of a spare, athletic make, and a sallow, almost a swarthy, complexion. His eyes were of a dull hazel; they lay deep in their sockets, and were surrounded by circles of a darker tinge than the rest of his face. Above them a pair of low, horizontal, coal-black eyebrows gave an inexpressibly hard and ascetic air to his countenance. He wore a black bombazette coat, the tight sleeves of which set off to great advantage his lean arms, the large joints of his elbows, his big wrists, and the heavy hands with which he grasped his beechen switch and the reins of his bridle. The remainder of his apparel consisted of a well-saved hat in that state of respectable rustiness in which that article is kept by decent people who do not often indulge themselves in the luxury of a new one, pepper-and-salt-colored satinet pantaloons, over which were drawn a pair of rust-colored boots, a black-silk waistcoat, and a scanty white cravat, the sharp, spear-like ends of which projected in different directions from



under his brown throat. He bestrode a tall, strong-limbed, lean, black horse; across the saddle hung a well-filled port-manteau, and from under the pommel peeped a bit of sheepskin dressed with wool on, placed there to prevent the animal's back from being chafed with the journey.

He returned a civil answer to my salutation, with a broad and prolonged enunciation of the vowel sounds and a melancholy quaver of the voice. The tones, however, were full, mellow, and evidently cultivated. If I had previously any doubt of his vocation, it was now removed; and I instantly set him down for an itinerant preacher of the Baptist or Methodist persuasion. Adapting my conversation to his supposed profession, I inquired of him the state of religion in those parts. On this theme he was abundantly eloquent, and I soon found that he was a Baptist preacher who had been on a short visit to the neighborhood of Wheeling, and was now on his way to some of the villages west of Lexington, on the west bank of the Kentucky River, to perform, beside the translucent streams and under the venerable trees of that fine region, those picturesque solemnities of his sect, to which they love to point as a manifold emblem of purification from moral pollution, and of the resurrection from the death of sin and the sleep of the grave. He told me a checkered history of religious awakenings in some places and hundreds gathered into the fold, and of backslidings and indifference in others.

Afterward the conversation passed to other subjects. I could not help speaking of the exceeding richness of the vegetation in that country as compared with that of the Atlantic coast.

"Yes," replied my companion, "the land is a land of milk and honey, and the clouds drop fatness upon it, unworthy and sinful as we are who make it our abiding-place. God maketh his sun to shine on the evil and unthankful, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. But are you from the Atlantic States?"

"I am."

"From New England?" inquired he, speaking more quickly than he had done before, and with something on his countenance more like a smile than I had seen him wear.

"No, from New York."

His countenance relapsed again into its former gloomy expression. "I," said he, "am from New England."

"Your friends probably live in that part of the country," said I, availing myself of that freedom of interrogation of which he had set me the example.

"Friends, if you will," answered he, "I may have there, but relations none. There lives not in all the United States, though they are my native country, a single human being with whom I can claim kindred. God has cut away, by a terrible, but, as I willingly believe, a merciful, dispensation, all the ties of an earthy nature that bound me to my fellow-creatures. The members of the Church of Christ, and they only, are now my fathers and mothers, and sisters and brethren."

"You allude, I perceive," said I, "to some remarkable event of your life. May I take the liberty of inquiring what it is?"

"Formerly," he replied, "it gave me pain to speak of it; but I have related it often, and it does so no longer; and, moreover, I am convinced that it is sinful on my part to wish to conceal the dealings of God's providence with me from those who are willing to hear what they have been."

"You must know, then, that my father was a native of the island of Nantucket, and the only son of an emigrant pair from St. John's, on the coast of Newfoundland. My mother was from Wales. She was but a child when her father took passage for this country, with her and two brothers older than herself. The vessel in which they came was wrecked off Cape Cod, and all on board perished except my mother and four of the crew, who were picked up by the fishermen of Hyannis. She was received into one of the most wealthy families on the

Cape, and was brought up by the good people as if she had been one of their own children.

“My father had been a seafaring man in early life, and had risen to the command of a merchant vessel. At the age of thirty-five he became acquainted with my mother, who was some fifteen years younger than himself, and made her proposals of marriage, which she would accept only on condition that he should quit the sea, which had been the grave of her family. He made the promise she required, they were married, and removed to the interior, where my father bought a farm and settled as an agriculturist.

“Our residence was on the highlands west of the Connecticut River. There was a little, decayed old dwelling on the farm when my father came to live there; he caused it to be pulled down, and had a neat white cottage built upon the spot. In this cottage was I born, and here I passed the earliest years of my life, and, speaking with respect to temporal comforts and enjoyments, the happiest. It was a lovely spot—lovely then, but now no longer so. It is bare and desolate; the besom of destruction has swept it. The winds, God’s ministers, were sent against it to raze its walls, and root up its shades and slay its inmates.

“I sometimes think that the distinctness with which that abode of my youth and its dear inhabitants rises before my imagination is a device of the enemy to tempt me, and to shake my resignation to the decrees of Almighty. A young orchard sheltered the cottage on the northwest, and back of the orchard rose a wooded hill. On the south side of the house was our garden, which bordered on a clear, prattling brook. To the east were rich meadows and fields of grain, and pastures where I gathered strawberries and looked for birds’ nests, all sloping away gently for a considerable distance, after which they sunk down out of sight into the deep glen of a river, whose shallow murmurs were often heard by us as we sat under the wild-cherry trees before our door. To the east of the river spread a wide tract of country; in full sight

from our windows, farm-houses, painted red and white, with their orchards and cornfields and woodlands; steeples of distant churches, and a blue horizon of woods bounding the scene.

“Time went by pleasantly until my tenth year. Childhood is the only season of life in which happy years do not pass away swiftly. They glide softly, but they do not fly, and they seem as long as they are full of enjoyment. I had an elder sister, Jane, just arrived at seventeen; a tall, straight, blooming girl, who had been my instructress in all childish pleasures. She taught me where to find the earliest blossoms and the sweetest berries, showed me where the beech shed its nuts thickest when it felt the October frosts, led me beside wild streams in the woods, read godly books with me, and taught me to sing godly hymns on Sundays under the trees of our orchard. There were two brothers—twins—five years younger than myself, to whom I now performed the same office; and beautiful creatures they were, if I can trust my memory, as ever were sent into the world to be recalled in the bud of life; fair, round-faced, ruddy, good-humored, full of a perpetual flow of spirits, and, in look, gesture, and disposition, the exact copies of each other. And as they were alike in birth and mind and outward semblance, so they were alike in their lives, and in their deaths not divided. I was their constant companion, and sometimes our sister, who had now grown to maturity, would leave her sedate occupations and join our sports.

“My mother was of a delicate frame, and a quiet and somewhat sad turn of mind. The calamity by which her family had perished made a deep impression upon her, and disposed her heart to religious affections. Her eyes would sometimes fill with tears as she looked at us in the midst of our pastimes, and she would often mildly check our boisterous mirth. She was our catechist, she made us read our Bibles, and taught us our little hymns and prayers.

“My father was, it was thought, an unregenerate son; but he was what the world calls a good moral man, and much re-



spected by his neighbors. He was of an even, quiet temper, never greatly exhilarated by good, nor greatly depressed by bad, fortune. I do not recollect ever seeing him apparently better pleased than when his children were noisiest in their play, when he would sit looking at us with great complacency, and tell our mother how much he was like us at our age. He was what is called a silent man. He said but little, and, indulgent as he was, that little was a law to us. The neighborhood also treated him with great deference. His opinion was consulted in all difficult cases ; he was made town clerk, and then sent a representative to the general court, and finally received a commission of the peace.

“ My father, as I have already told you, was originally a seafaring man, and his profession had made him familiar with all the appearances of the heavens. To his knowledge of this kind, acquired on the ocean and the coast of the Atlantic, he now added that gained by a daily observation of the aspect of the heavens in the interior, until he became celebrated in those parts for his skill in discerning the face of the sky. He was looked upon as a sort of oracle on the subject of the weather, and his predictions were revered even more than those of the almanac. It was not always that an opinion could be extracted from him, but, when obtained, it never failed of being verified. His hay never got wet while lying green on the ground, nor do I believe that he was ever overtaken by a shower in any of his excursions from home. He would pass whole hours in gazing at the sky and watching the courses of the clouds. An observation of the weather was his first business in the morning and his last at night ; and, if the manly placidity of his temper was ever on any occasion disturbed, it was only when the weather was more capricious than ordinary, when it refused to conform to fixed rules, and failed to fulfil the promises it held forth. In this I think he was wrong, as questioning the providence of God, exerted in the great courses of nature ; but who is without his errors ?

“ The country in which we lived was high and hilly. The

streams by which it was intersected flowed in deep, narrow glens, unpleasant from their chilliness, shade, and mists at morning and evening ; and the farms and dwellings lay on the broad, elevated country between them. Thus an ample sweep was afforded for the winds, which blew over the country with as little obstruction as on the summits of the mountains. The snow was often piled in the winter to the roofs of the houses, and you might see orchards in which every tree leans to the southwest, bent and made to grow in that position by the strong and continued gales.

“ In the last years of my residence in this pleasant abode we had, about the setting in of summer, several weeks of uncommon heat and drought. God sealed up the firmament, and made the heavens over our heads brass, and the earth under our feet ashes. Clouds floated over the fiery sky and brought no rain ; the atmosphere was filled with a dull, dry haze, as if the finer dust of the ground had risen and mingled with it. Out of this haze the sun emerged at morning, and again dipped into it at evening, hiding his face long before he reached the horizon. The grass of the field ceased to grow, and became thin and white and dry before it ripened, and hissed mournfully whenever a breath of air passed over it. The birds chirped feebly in the trees ; the cattle lowed faintly in the meadows, and gathered about the moister spots of soil. All this while the winds scarcely blew, or but softly, nor with strength enough to detach from the cherry-trees before our door the loose leaves that put on the yellowness of September and dropped of their own accord, one by one, spinning round as they descended to the earth. I had never known my father so uneasy and fidgety as at that period. He would stand for hours considering the aspect of the heavens, and, after the twilight was down, he was out by the door gazing at that canopy through which the stars dimly tremble. My mother in the mean time called her children about her and taught us a prayer for rain.

“ At length came a day of more perfect calm and stillness

than we had experienced even in that season of calms. The leaves on the trees were so motionless that you might almost have fancied them wrought of metal to mock the growth of the vegetable world. I remember feeling uneasy at the depth and continuance of that silence, broken only by the gurgle of the brook at the bottom of our garden, where a slender thread of heated water still crept along, the sound of which fell on my ear with a painful distinctness. There was no cloud, not a speck—nothing but that thick, whitish haze to be seen in all the sky. My father went often during the day and stood anxiously looking at the atmosphere, while I crept silently near him with my two little brothers. There was something in his manner that made us afraid, though of what we knew not. My mother, too, appeared sadder than usual. Once when my father returned into the house he told her that this was just such weather as had preceded the waterspout that overwhelmed the fishing-boat off the coast of Cape Cod thirty years before, and drowned all on board.

“‘I fear greatly,’ said he, ‘that some mischief is brewing for us or our neighbors, but I hope, at least, that it will steer clear of all our houses.’

“The night at length arrived, and no evil had as yet come nigh us or our dwellings. My mother saw us all in our beds, made us say our prayers, and bade us good-night in that mild, affectionate voice which I shall never forget; but for my part I could not sleep, agitated as I was with the vague and awful apprehensions with which my father’s looks and words, and the strange appearances of nature, had filled my mind, and which were struggling to clothe themselves with images. Sleep at length fell upon me—a deep sleep—and with it brought visions of the night. I imagined that the profound silence was suddenly broken with strange and terrible crashings, and masses of earth and portions of sky were mingling and whirling and rolling over each other. I awoke with my limbs bathed in sweat, and it was long before my fears would suffer me to move them. When the usual current of my sensations

was restored, I was comforted to find myself still in my own familiar couch, though in the midst of utter darkness, and that awful lifeless silence so deep that I could hear the clicking of my father's watch in the next room.

"The sun rose as usual the next day, and the same calm and silence continued. My own apprehensions had passed away with the night, though I observed my father watching the cloudless, hazy skies with the same air of anxiety. About twelve o'clock I was in the orchard back of our cottage, amusing myself with gathering the largest unripe apples which the drought had caused to drop in great numbers from the trees, intending to carry them to my two little brothers to play with. My father had left his occupation in the field on account of the heat, and was then in the house. Suddenly I heard a crackling sound to the southwest, as of a mighty flame running among brushwood, and blown into fury by a strong wind. Looking toward that quarter, I beheld a small, dark cloud, enlarging, blackening, and advancing every instant, and under it the wood agitated with a violent motion, the tree-tops waving and tossing, the trunks swaying to and fro, bending low and then erecting themselves suddenly, as if wrestling with a furious gust. Birds were flying in all directions from the scene of the commotion, and cattle running affrighted from the wood in which they had sought shelter from the noonday heat. Then I saw broken branches, and green leaves from the tree-tops, and withered ones from the ground, and dust from the dry earth, lifted together into the air in a vast column and whirled rapidly round, and heard the crash of falling trees and the snapping of the shivered trunks, as if the Prince of the Power of the Air, having received permission, had fallen in great wrath upon the forest to destroy it. Before that advancing whirlwind the trees bowed to the ground, and the next moment were raised again by the power of the gale, and drawn into the vortex and twisted off by the roots, and whirled with all their branches into the air, and tossed to one side and the other upon the



summits of the surrounding wood. It was but for a moment—a brief moment of astonishment and terror—that I stood gazing on this spectacle. I turned and made for the house with my utmost speed, and as I ran I heard the roar of the whirlwind behind me, and was sensible of a sudden shade passing over the heavens. When I arrived at the house and opened the door, I saw my father, who had been engaged in reading, just rising from his seat and going toward the window, with the book in his hand, to learn the cause of the tumult without. That book was the Bible, and the recollection of this single circumstance forms a ground of consolation and hope, in the recollection of his sudden and unforewarned death, which I would not be deprived of for worlds.

“He gave a single look, the book dropped from his hand, and, before I had time to utter a word, he called out in his strong voice: ‘Run—run for your lives—leave the house this instant—the whirlwind is upon us.’

“As he spoke, the sound of the gust was heard howling about the dwelling, and the timbers cracked and groaned in the mighty blast. My mother had hastily gathered the children, and was putting us before her to go out the door, when all at once a terrible crash was heard over our heads, the walls shook, the windows were shattered in pieces, the floor heaved under our feet, and the ceiling, bursting upward in several places, showed us the roof raised and borne off by the wind. The walls and partitions of the house were swayed to and fro like a curtain. My father was a man of great bodily strength, of the middle height, but brawny and muscular beyond most persons I have known. When I last saw him he had put his strong arms against the wall that threatened to overwhelm us, and was bracing himself against it to give us an opportunity to escape. I saw also my mother, who had taken the two youngest children by the hand, her hair streaming upward in disorder, making for the door. I found myself, I know not how, without the house, and scarcely was I there when a rush of air seemed to draw my breath from my very lungs, and I was

lifted from the ground amid a whirl of dust and broken branches, and shingles and boards from the building. How high I was carried I know not, for I saw only the confusion around me; but shortly afterward I felt myself softly deposited among boughs and leaves.

“I must have swooned after I descended, for I recollect slowly recovering my consciousness and finding my garments wet and heavy, and the rain beating upon me. I was among the thick foliage of a maple that had been overthrown by the whirlwind. A man whose voice and mien were familiar to me, and whom, as my senses gradually returned, I recognized as one of my neighbors, came and took me off, and placed me beside him on the ground. Around me the earth was strewn with splintered branches of trees, rails, and boards, and, looking westward to the hill, I beheld where fences had been swept away, and stone walls scattered, and a wide path had been broken through the wood, along which masses of fresh earth appeared among the heaps of prostrate trees, and tall, shivered trunks stood overlooking their uprooted fellows. At a little distance from me was a heap of bricks and rubbish, and, on my inquiring what it could be, I was told that it was the ruins of my father’s house. Then flashed upon my mind the recollection of that moment of confusion, haste, and affright, which passed before I left it, and, in a transport of anxiety amounting almost to agony, I ran to the spot. I found the neighbors already gathered about it, and busy in removing the rubbish, in order to ascertain if any of the family were buried beneath; and, weeping all the while, I assisted them as far as my childish strength would allow, notwithstanding the good-natured attempts that were made to prevent me. Let me hasten over what followed. I said in the beginning that I could relate my story without any painful emotions, but I was mistaken, for when I come to this part of it I am always sick at heart. They were found—crushed to death by the fall of the chimney and the beams of the building—my father, my dear mother, and the two lovely children

still in her arms. But where was my sister? Had she been so fortunate as to escape? Even this hope was torn from me, for she was soon found, where the whirlwind had cast her, in the edge of the brook now swollen by rains, the water rippling against her cheek, white as snow, and her dishevelled hair floating in the current.

“There are no expressions that can describe the bitterness of my grief. The bodies were carried to a neighboring house; I followed them; I remained with them all night; I refused to be comforted, but with the feverish hope which sometimes crossed my mind that the dead were in a state of insensibility from which they would awaken. I slept not, I ate not, till they were buried; I struggled madly and with moanings of agony against those who came to put them in the coffins. They were carried to the grave the next day amid a great concourse of people from all the surrounding country, who filled the house and gathered in a solemn and silent multitude around the door. The hymn given out on that occasion by the minister was one my mother had taught me to repeat from memory; and when they sang the following stanza, the eyes of all were turned upon me, by reason of my passionate sobbing:

“‘Man’s life is like the grass,  
Or like the morning flower;  
A sharp wind sweeps the field,  
It withers in an hour!’

I was not allowed to see the bodies covered with earth, lest my health might suffer from the excess of my grief; but when at last they told me they were buried, I suffered myself to be undressed and led to my bed, from which I did not rise until several days afterward.

“The neighbor to whose house the bodies of my family were taken, a devout and just man of the Baptist persuasion, allowed me to remain under his roof, and treated me with great kindness. He was appointed my guardian, and proved a faith-

ful steward of the remains of my father's property. The terrible calamity with which I had been visited had engendered a sadness that hung upon me like a continual cloud; but, as I grew up, my mind was opened to receive the consolations of the Gospel. I saw that the chastisement, though severe, was meant for good, and that the Lord, by removing all whom I loved, and separating me from the children of men, had enabled me to devote myself the more entirely to the work of reconciling my fellow-creatures to him. I came, therefore, to this region of the West, where the fields were white for the reaper, where the harvest was plenteous and the laborers few, and entered upon my new calling, which has not been unblest with a cheerful and encouraged spirit."

Here the travelling preacher made an end of his story, and I had no opportunity of remarking on certain of its circumstances which seemed to me a little extraordinary, since just at that moment he found himself opposite the house of one of the brethren, a thrifty farmer, where, he said, he was under an engagement to stop.\*

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\* When Mr. Bryant abandoned the practice of law, in 1825, to engage in a literary career in New York, he tried his hand in writing narratives or tales, of which he contributed some ten or fifteen to various periodicals; but, finding himself, as he modestly said, unable to rival Irving, Cooper, and Miss Sedgwick in that field, he gave up the undertaking. The specimens here republished are, with a single exception, from the "Talisman."



## THE INDIAN SPRING.

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ONE of the adventures of my life upon which I have since oftenest reflected, and concerning which my imagination is most inclined to dispute the dictates of my reason, happened many years ago, when, quite a young man, I made an excursion into the interior of the State of New York, and passed a few days in the region whose waters flow into the east branch of the Susquehanna. My readers will easily judge for themselves whether what I am going to relate can be accounted for from natural causes. For my own part, however, so vivid is the impression it has left upon my mind, and so difficult is it with me to distinguish my recollections of it from that of the absolute realities of my life, that I find it the easier belief to ascribe it to a cause above nature.

I think I have elsewhere intimated that I have great sympathy with believers in the supernatural. Theoretically, I am as much a philosopher, and have as little of what is commonly called superstition about me, as most persons of my acquaintance; but the luxury of a little superstition in practice, the strong and active play into which it calls the imagination, the fine thrill it sends through the veins, the alternate gushes of fear and courage that come over us when under its influence, are too agreeable a relief from the dull realities of the material world to be readily given up. My own individual experience also makes me indulgent to those whose credulity in these matters exceeds my own. Is it to be wondered at that the

dogmas of philosophy should not gain credit when they have the testimony of our own senses against them? You say that this evidence is often counterfeited by the tricks of fancy, the hallucinations of the nerves, and by our very dreams. You are right—but who shall in all cases distinguish the false experience from the true?

The part of the country of which I am speaking had just been invaded by the footsteps of cultivation. Openings had been made here and there in the great natural forest, log houses had been built, the farmers were gathering in their first crops of tall grass, and the still taller harvests of wheat and rye stood up by the side of the woods in the clearings. It was then the month of June, and I sallied forth from my lodgings at a paltry log tavern to ramble in the woods with a friend of mine who had come with me from New York. We set out amid the warblings of the birds, scarce waiting for the dew to be dried up from the herbage. I carried a fowling-piece on my shoulder; not that I meant to be the death of any living creature that fine morning, when everything seemed so happy, but because such a visible pretext for a stroll in the woods and fields satisfies at once the curiosity of those whom you meet, and saves you often a world of staring, and sometimes not a few impertinent questions. I hold it right and fair to kill game late in the autumn, when the animal has had his feast of fruits and nuts, and is left with a prospect of a long, hard, uncomfortable winter before him, and the dangers of being starved to death. But to take his life in the spring, or the beginning of summer, when he has so many fine sunny months of frolic and plenty before him—it is gratuitous cruelty, and I have ever religiously abstained from it.

My companion was much more corpulent than I, and as slow a walker as I was a fast one. However, he good-naturedly exerted himself to keep up with me, and I made more than one attempt to moderate my usual speed for his accommodation. The effort worried us both. At length he fairly gave out, and, bringing the butt of his fowling-piece smartly

to the ground, stood still, with both hands grasping the muzzle.

"I beg," said he, "that you will go on at your own pace. I promise faithfully not to stir from the spot till you are fairly out of sight."

"But I am very willing to walk slower."

"No," rejoined my friend, "we did not set out together for the purpose of making each other uncomfortable, nor will we, if I can help it. Here we have been fretting and chafing each other for half an hour. Why, it is like yoking an ox with a race-horse. Go on, I beseech you, while I stop to recover my wind. I wish you a pleasant walk of it. I shall expect to see you back at our landlord's at one o'clock."

I took him at his word, and proceeded. I rambled through tall old groves clear of underwood, beside rivulets broken into little pools and cascades by rocks and fallen timber, along the edges of dark, shrubby swamps, and across sunny clearings, until I was tired. At length I came to a pleasant natural glade on the slope of a hill, and sat down under the shade of a tree to rest myself. It was a narrow opening in the woods, extending for some distance up the hill, and terminating in that quarter at the base of a ridge of rocks, above which rose the forest. At the lower end, near which I was, a spring rose up in a little hollow and formed a streamlet, which ran off under the trees. A most still, quiet nook it was, sheltered from all winds; the leaves were not waved, nor the grass bent by a breath of air, and the sun came down between the inclosing trees with so strong a heat that, except in the shade, I felt the warmth of the ground through the soles of my shoes.

As I lay with my head propped on my hand, and my elbow buried in a mass of herbage, my thoughts turned involuntarily upon the ancient inhabitants of these woods. Here, said I to myself, in this very spot, some Indian doubtless fixed his cabin; or haply some little neighborhood, the branch of a larger tribe, nestled in this sylvan enclosure. That circle of mouldering timber is probably the remains of the wigwam of the last in-

habitant, and that great vine which sprawls over it was probably once supported by its walls, and, when they were abandoned and decaying, dragged them to the ground, as many a parasite has done by his credulous benefactor. Here the Indian woman planted her squashes and tended her maize; here the Indian father brought forth his boys to try their bows, and aim their little tomahawks at the trees, teaching—for even in the solemnity of my feelings I could not forbear the pun—teaching

“the young idea how to shoot.”

That spring, which gushes up so brightly and abundantly from the ground, yielding them, when their exercise was over, a beverage never mingled with the liquid poisons of the civilized world, and gave its cresses to season the simple repast. Gradually my imagination became both awed and kindled by these reflections. I felt rebuked by the wild genius of a place familiar for centuries only with the race of red men and hunters, and I almost expected to see some Indian, with his tomahawk and bow, walk up to me and ask me what I did there.

My thoughts were diverted from this subject by my eyes falling upon an earth-newt, as red as fire, crawling lazily and with an almost imperceptible motion over the grass. I yawned by a sort of sympathy with the sluggish creature, and, oppressed with fatigue and heat, for the sun was getting high, loosened my cravat and stretched out my legs to an easier position. All at once I found myself growing drowsy, my eyelids dropping involuntarily, my eyes rolling in their sockets with a laborious attempt to keep themselves open, and the landscape swimming and whirling before me, as if I saw it in a mirror suspended by a loose string and waving in the wind. Once or twice the scene was entirely lost for a moment to my vision, and I perceived that I had actually been asleep. It struck me that I might be better employed than in taking a nap at that time of day, and, accordingly, I rose and walked across the glade until I came to the foot of the rocks at the



upper end of it, when I turned to take another look at the pleasant and quiet spot. Judge of my astonishment when I actually beheld, standing by the very circle of rubbish near which I had been reposing, and which I had taken for the remains of a wigwam, an Indian—a real Indian—the very incarnation of the images that had been floating in my fancy. I will not say that I did not spring from the ground when the figure met my eye, so sudden and startling was the shock it gave me. He was not one of that degenerate kind which I had seen in various parts of the country wearing hats, frock-coats, pantaloons, and Dutch blankets, but was dressed in the original garb of his nation. A covering of skin was wrapped about his loins, a mantle of the same was flung loosely over his shoulders, and his legs were bare from the middle of the thigh down to his ornamented moccasins. A single tuft of stiff, black hair on the top of his head, from which the rest was carefully plucked, was mingled with the gaudy plumage of different birds; a bow and a bundle of arrows peeped over his shoulder; a necklace of bears' claws hung down upon his breast; his right hand carried a tomahawk, and the fingers of his left were firmly closed, like those of one whose physical vigor and resoluteness of purpose suffered not the least muscle of his frame to relax for a moment. Notwithstanding the distance at which he stood, and which might be a hundred paces at least, I saw his whole figure, even to the minutest article of dress, with what seemed to me an unnatural distinctness. His countenance had that expression which has been so often remarked upon as peculiar to the aborigines of our country—a settled look of sullenness, sadness, and suspicion, as if when moulded by nature it had been visibly stamped with the presentiment of the decline and disappearance of their race. The features were strongly marked, hard, and stern; high cheek-bones, a broad forehead, an aquiline nose, garnished with an oblong piece of burnished copper; a mouth, somewhat wide, between a parenthesis of furrows, and a bony and fleshless chin. But then his eyes—such eyes I have never seen! dis-

tant as they were from me, they seemed close to my own, and to ray out an unpleasant brightness from their depths, like twin stars of evil omen. Their influence unstrung all my sinews, and a gush of sudden and almost suffocating heat came over my whole frame. I averted my look instantly and fixed it upon the feet of the savage, shod with their long moccasins, and standing motionless among the thick weeds; but I could not keep it there. Again my eyes returned upward; again they encountered his, glittering in the midst of that calm, sullen face, and again that oppressive, stifling sensation came over me.

It was natural that I should feel an impulse to remove from so unpleasant a neighborhood; I therefore shouldered my fowling-piece, climbed the rock before me, and penetrated into the woods. As I proceeded, the idea took possession of me that I was followed by the Indian, and I walked pretty fast in order to shake it off; but I found this impossible. I had got into a state of fidgety, nervous excitement, and it seemed to me that I felt the rays of those bright, unnatural eyes on my shoulders, my back, my arms, and even my hands, as I flung them back in walking. At length I looked back, and, notwithstanding I half expected to see him, I was scarcely less surprised than at first, when I beheld the same figure, just at the same distance, standing motionless as then, his bright eyes gleaming upon me between the trunks of the trees. A third time I felt that flush of dissolving heat, and a violent sweat broke out all over me. I have heard of the cold, clammy sweat of fear; mine was not of that temperature; it was as the warmest summer rain, warm and free and profuse as the current of brooks in the hottest and moistest season of dog-days. I walked on, keeping my sight fixed on the strange apparition. It did not seem to move, and, as I proceeded, gradually diminished by the natural effect of distance until I could scarcely distinguish it among the thick trunks and boughs of the forest. Happening to avert my eyes for a moment, I saw, as I turned again to the spot, that the figure had

swiftly and silently gained upon me, and was now at the same distance as when I first beheld it. A clearing lay before me. I saw the sunshine and the grass between the trunks of the trees, and, rushing forward, found myself under the open sky, and felt relieved by a freer air. I looked back, and nothing was to be seen of my pursuer. A small log-house stood in the open space, with a well beside it, and a tall, rude machine of the kind they call a well-sweep leaning over it, loaded with a bucket at one end and a heavy stone at the other. A boy of about twelve years of age was drawing water. The sight of a human habitation, and a habitation of white men, was a welcome one to me; and, tormented as I was with heat and thirst, I rejoiced at the prospect of refreshing myself with a draught of the cool, pure element. Accordingly, I made for the well, and arrived at it just as the boy was pouring the contents of the bucket into a large stone pitcher. "You will give me a taste of the water?" said I to him.

"And welcome," replied the boy, "if you'll drink out of the pitcher, for the mug is broke, and we haven't got any glasses."

I stooped, and, raising the heavy vessel to my lips, took a copious draught from the brim, where the cold water was yet sparkling with the bubbles raised by pouring it from the bucket. "Your water is very fine," said I, when I had recovered my breath.

"Yes, but not so fine as you'll get at the Indian spring," rejoined he. "That's the best water in all the country—the clearest, the coldest, and the sweetest. Father always sends me to the Indian spring when he wants the best water—when uncle comes up from York, or the minister makes us a visit."

"What is it that you call the Indian spring?" I inquired.

"Oh, I guess you must have passed it, by the way you came. Didn't you see a spring of water, east of a ledge of rocks, in a pretty spot of ground where there were no trees?"

"I believe I saw something of the kind," said I, recollecting

the glade in which I had thrown myself to rest shortly before, and its fountain.

"That was the Indian spring; and, if you took notice, you must have seen some old logs and sticks lying in a heap, and a few stones that look as if there had been fire on them. It was thought that an Indian family lived there before the country was settled by our people."

"Are there any Indians in this neighborhood at present?" I inquired, with some eagerness.

"Oh, no, indeed; they are gone to the west'ard, so they say, though I am not big enough to know anything about it. It was before father came into the country—long before. The only Indian I ever saw was Jemmy Sunkum, who came about last summer, selling brooms and begging cider."

"A tall, spare, strong-looking man, was he?" asked I, "dressed in skins, and carrying a bow?" my thoughts naturally recurring to the figure I had just seen.

The boy grinned. "Not much taller than I am, and as fat as a woodchuck; and as for the skins he wore, I never see any but his own through the holes of his trousers, unless it be a squirrel-skin that he carried his tobacco and loose change in. He wore an old hat with the crown torn out, and had lost one of his eyes—they say it was by drinking so much cider. Father swapped an old pair of pantaloons with him for a broom. But I must take this pitcher to father, who is at work in the corn-field yonder; so good-morning to you, sir."

The lad tripped away, whistling, and I sat down on one of the broad, flat stones by the well-side, under the shade of a young tree of the kind commonly called yellow willow, which in a year or two shoots up from a slip of the size of a man's finger into a fine, shapely, overshadowing tree. I laid my hat and gun by my side and wiped my hot and sweaty forehead, upon which the wind, that swayed to and fro the long, flexible, depending branches, breathed with a luxurious coolness.

The Indian I have seen cannot be the one that the boy means, said I to myself, nor probably any other of which the



inhabitants know anything. That fine, majestic savage is a very different being from the fat, one-eyed vagabond in the ragged trousers that the lad speaks of. It is probably some ancient inhabitant of the place, returned from the forest of the distant West to visit the scenes of his childhood. But what could he mean by following me in this manner, and why should he keep his eye fixed on me so strangely? As I said this, I looked along the forest I had just quitted, examining it carefully and with an eye sharpened by the excited state of my imagination, to see if I could discover anything of my late pursuer. All was quiet and motionless. I heard the bee as he flew by heavily from the cucumber-flowers in the garden near me, and the hum of the busy wheel from the open windows of the cottage; but face or form of human being I saw not. I replaced my hat on my head and my gun on my shoulder, crossed the clearing, and entered the opposite wood, intending to return home by a kind of circuit, for I did not care again to encounter the savage, whose demeanor was so mysterious.

I had proceeded but a few rods, when, a mingled sensation of uneasiness and curiosity inducing me to look over my shoulder, I started to behold the very figure, whose sight I was endeavoring to avoid, just entering the forest—the same brawny shoulders clad with skins, the same sad, stern, suspicious countenance, the same bright eyes thrilling and scorching me with their light. Again I felt that indescribable sensation of discomfort and heat, and the perspiration, which had ceased to flow while I sat by the well, again gushed forth from every pore. Involuntarily I stopped short. What was this being, and why should he dog my steps in this strange manner? What were his designs, pacific or hostile? and what method should I take to rid myself of his pursuit? I had tried walking away from him without effect; should I now adopt the expedient of walking up to him and asking his business? The thought struck me that, if his designs were malevolent, this step might bring me into danger. He was well armed

with a tomahawk and arrows, and who could tell the force and certainty of his aim? This fear, on reflection, I rejected as groundless and unmanly; for what cause had he to seek my life? It was but prudent, however, to prepare myself for the worst that could happen. I therefore examined my priming, and, as I had nothing but small bird-shot with me, I kicked up the dry leaves from the earth under my feet, and, selecting a handful of the smallest, smoothest, and roundest pebbles from among the gravel, put two or three of them into the muzzle, and lodged the rest in my pocket. As I turned, there was that face still, at the very edge of the forest, glaring steadily upon me, and watching my operations with the unchanging, stony, stoical expression of the Indian race. I replaced the piece on my shoulder, and advanced toward it. Scarcely had I gone three paces when it suddenly disappeared behind the huge old trunk of an old buttonwood- or plane-tree, that stood just in the edge of the clearing. I approached the tree; there was no living thing behind it or near it. I looked out into the clearing, and scanned its whole extent for the object of my search, but in vain. There was the cottage, in which the wheel was still humming, and the well with its young willow waving restlessly over it. The clearing was long and narrow, and widened away toward the south, where was a field of Indian corn, in which I could distinguish my friend, the lad who had given me the water, in company with a man who, I suppose, was his father, diligently engaged in hoeing the corn; and at intervals I could hear the click of their hoes against the stones. Nothing else was to be seen, nothing else to be heard. I turned and searched the bushes about me; nothing was there. I looked up into the old plane-tree above my head; the clean and handsomely divided branches, speckled with white, guided my eye far into the very last of their verdurous recesses, but no creature, not even a bird, was to be seen there.

Strange as it may seem, I found myself refreshed and cooled by this search, and relieved from the burning and

suffocating heat that I felt while the eye of the savage rested upon me. My perplexity was, however, anything but lessened; and I resolved to pursue my way home with as little delay as possible, and spell out, if I could, the mystery at my leisure. Accordingly, I plunged again into the woods, and, after proceeding a little way, began to change my course, in a direction which I judged must bring me to the spot where I had rested in the Indian glade near the spring, from which I doubted not I could find my way home without difficulty. As I proceeded, the heat of the day seemed to grow more and more oppressive. There was shade about me and over my head—thick shade of oak, maple, and walnut—but it seemed to me as if beams of the hottest midsummer sun were beating upon my back and scorching the skin of my neck. I turned my head, and there again stood the Indian, with that eternal, intolerable glare of the eyes. I stopped not, but went on with a quicker pace. My face was flushed, my brow throbbed audibly, my head ached, the veins in my hands were swollen till they looked like ropes, and the sweat dropped from my hair like rain. A fine brook crossed my way, clear as diamond, full to the very brim, and sending up a cool vapor from its surface that promised for the grateful temperature of its waters. I longed to strip off my clothes, and lay myself down in its bed at full length, and steep my burning limbs in its current. Just then I remembered the story of Tam O'Shanter, pursued by witches, and saved by crossing a running stream. If there be any witchcraft in this thing, said I to myself, it will not follow me beyond this brook. I was ashamed of the thought as it crossed my mind, but I leaped the brook notwithstanding, and hurried on. Turning afterward to observe the effect of my precaution, I saw the savage standing in the midst of the very current, the bright water flowing round his copper-colored ankles. The sight was as vexatious as it was singular, and did not by any means diminish my haste. A little opening, where the trees had been cut down and the ground sown with European grasses, came

in my way, and I entered it. In this spot the red and white clover grew rankly, and blossomed side by side with columbine and cranesbill, the natives of the soil—flowers and verdure the more striking in their beauty for the unsightly and blackened stumps of trees standing thick among them—a sweet, still nook, a perpetual concert of humming-birds and bees, and a thousand beautiful winged insects, for which our common speech has no name, and exhaling from the herbage an almost overpowering stream of fragrance. I no longer saw my pursuer. What could this mean? Was this figure some restless shadow, that could haunt only its ancient wilderness, and was excluded from every spot reclaimed and cultivated by the white man? I took advantage of this respite to wipe my face and forehead; I unbuttoned my waistcoat, took off my cravat and put it in my pocket, threw back the collar of my coat from my shoulders, fanned myself awhile with my hat, and then went on. Soon after I again entered the wood, I perceived with surprise that my tormentor had gained upon me. He was twice as near to me as when I first saw him, and the strange light that seemed to shoot from his eyes was more intense and insufferable than ever. I was in a part of the forest which was thickly strewn with the fallen trunks of trees, wrenched up, as it seemed to me, long ago by some mighty wind. I hastened on, leaping from one to another, occasionally looking back at my pursuer. The air in my face, as I flew forward, seemed as if issuing from the mouth of a furnace. In leaping upon a spot where the earth was moist and soft, one of my shoes remained embedded fast in the soil. It is an old one, said I to myself; I shall be lighter and cooler without it. Immediately the low branch of a tree struck my hat from my head as I rushed onward. No matter, thought I, I will send a boy to look for it in the morning.

As I sprang from a rock my other shoe flew off, and dropped on the ground before me; I caught it up without stopping, and jerked it over my head with all my strength at the savage behind me. When I next looked back, I saw that



he had decked himself with my spoils. He had strung both my shoes to his necklace of bears' claws, and had crowded down my hat upon his head over that tuft of long black hair mingled with feathers, the ends of which stood out under the brim in front, forming a wild, grotesque shade to those strangely bright eyes. Still I went on, and, in springing upon a log covered with green moss, and moist and slimy with decay, my foot slipped, and I could only keep from falling by dropping the fowling-piece I carried. I did not stop to pick it up, and the next instant it was upon the shoulder of the Indian, or demon, that chased me. I darted forward, panting, glowing, perspiring, ready to sink to the earth with heat and fatigue, until suddenly I found myself on the edge of that ridge of rocks which rose above the Indian glade, where I had thrown myself to rest under a tree in the morning, before my steps had been dogged by the savage. The whole scene lay beneath my feet—the spring, the ruins of the wigwam, the tree under which I reclined. A single desperate leap took me far down into the glade below me, and a few rapid strides brought me to the very spot where I had been reposing, and where the pressure of my form still remained on the grass. A shrill, wild shout, with which the woods rang in sharp echoes, rose upon the air, and instantly I perceived that my pursuer had leaped also, and was at my side, and had seized me with a strong and sudden grip that shook every fibre of my frame. A strange darkness came over all visible objects, and I sank to the ground. An interval of insensibility followed, the duration of which I have no means of computing, and from which I was at last aroused by noises near me, and by motions of my body produced by some impulse from without. I opened my eyes on the very spot where I remembered to have reclined in the morning. My hat was off, my hair and clothes were steeped in sweat, my fowling-piece and shoes lay within a few feet of me, but scattered in different directions. My friend, who had accompanied me at the outset of my ramble, was shaking me by the shoulder,

bawling my name in my ear, and asking me if I meant to lie there all day. I sat up, and found that the shade of the tree under which I was had shifted many feet from its original place, and that I was lying exposed to the burning beams of the sun. My old acquaintance, the red earth-newt, had made great progress in the grass, having advanced at least a yard from the place where I remembered to have seen him when I was beginning to grow drowsy, before my adventure with the savage. My friend complained that he had been looking for me for more than an hour, and hallooing himself hoarse without effect, and that he was sure we should be late for dinner. I said nothing to my companion about what had happened until the next day, when I ventured to relate a part of the strange series of real or imaginary circumstances connected with my ramble. He laughed at the earnestness of my manner, and very promptly and flippantly said it was nothing but a dream. My readers may possibly be of the same opinion; and I myself, when in a philosophical mood, incline to this way of accounting for the matter. At other times, however when I recall to mind the various images and feelings of that time, deeply and distinctly engraved on my memory, I find nothing in them which should lead me to class them with the illusions of sleep, and nothing to distinguish them from the waking experience of my life.

## THE MARRIAGE BLUNDER.

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I HAVE never been able to understand the peculiar significance of the old and often-quoted maxim that matches are made in heaven, as if Providence had more to do with our marriages, and we ourselves less, than with the other enterprises and acts of our lives. The truth is, that nothing we do is transacted with more deliberation than our matrimonial engagements. The talk about rashness, precipitancy, and blindness in the parties between whom the union is formed is all cant, and cant of the most ancient and stale kind. I wonder it is not exploded in an age when old theories and long-established opinions are thrown aside with as little ceremony or remorse as a grave-digger shovels up the bones and dust of past generations. In almost every marriage that takes place, the bridegroom has passed by many a fair face before he has made his final selection, and the bride refused many a wooer. The parties are united after a courtship generally of months; the fair one defers the day of the nuptials from mere maiden coyness, and the lover must have time to provide her a habitation. Religious ceremonies, the forms of law, the preparations for the festivity of the occasion, all interpose their numerous delays. Even where the parties have nothing to do with the matter themselves, it is managed with great reflection and contrivance, with negotiations warily opened and skilfully conducted on the part of their relations. Why, the very making of these matches, which the proverb so flippant-

ly affirms to be made without our agency, constitutes nearly half the occupation of civilized society. For this the youth applies himself diligently to the making of his fortune; for this the maiden studies the graces and accomplishments of her sex. I have known persons who for years never thought of any other subject. I have known mothers who for years made it the business of their lives to settle their daughters. The premeditation of matrimony influences all the fashions, amusements, and employments of mankind. What a multitude of balls and parties and calls and visits and journeys are owing to this fruitful cause! What managing and manoeuvring, what dressing and dancing, what patching and painting, how much poetry and, eke, how much prose, what quantities of music and conversation and criticism and scandal and civility that otherwise would never have had an existence! The result justifies the supposition of deliberation; and most marriages are accordingly made with sufficient wisdom. Talk of the risk undertaken by the candidate for the happiness of conjugal life! The man who marries is not so often cheated as the man who buys a horse, even when the bargain is driven for him by the most knowing jockey. Few are unfortunate in a wife. Marriages are comfortable and respectable things the world over, with a few exceptions. Ill-natured people torment each other, it is true, but if they were not married they would torment somebody else, unless they retired to a hermitage; while, on the other hand, good tempers are improved by the domestic affections which the married state calls forth.

If marriage happened to a man without his knowledge or consent; if it came upon one unexpectedly, like a broken leg, or a fever, or a legacy from a rich relation, or a loss by a broken bank; if young men and young women were to lay their heads on their pillows in celibacy and wake the next morning in wedlock; if one were to have no voice in the selection of a wife, but were obliged to content himself with one chosen for him by lot—there would, I grant, be some



propriety in the maxim I have mentioned. But, in a matter which is the subject of so much discussion and deliberation as marriage, not only on the part of the youth and the damsel, but of all friends and acquaintances, and which is hedged round with so many forms and ceremonies, it is nonsense to talk of any particular fatality. I recollect but two instances of people being coupled together not only without their knowledge or consent, but without even that of their friends. The marriages took place on the same day, in the same church, and from the misery in which the parties lived it might be inferred that the matches were made anywhere else but in heaven. I will relate the story, as it is rather a curious one, though, I admit, not at all romantic. I would make it more so, if in my power, for the gratification of certain persons whose fair hands will turn these pages ; but I have no skill in embellishing plain matters of fact.

Some years since, when I was at Natchitoches, on the banks of the Red River, I became acquainted with a French cotton-planter of the name of La Ruche, whose house stood at a little distance from the village. He was a lively, shrivelled old gentleman, dried almost to a mummy by seventy hot Louisiana summers, with a head as white as snow, but a step as light as that of the deer he hunted. He loved to tell of old times, of the adventures of his youth, and of the history of his contemporaries and the country. The novelty of these subjects stimulated my curiosity and kindled my imagination, and it may readily be supposed that he found me a most willing listener. For this quality of mine he took a vehement liking to me, and used to invite me to his plantation, where he would keep me, in spite of all my excuses, for days together. La Ruche was the descendant of one of the early settlers of Louisiana, the younger son of an ancient Gascon family who came out with La Harpe in the early part of the eighteenth century and made one of the colony which he led to the banks of the Red River. The father of my friend, a wealthy planter, had sent him in his youth to be educated at Paris. After an absence

of six years, in which he acquired a competent share of the graces and intelligence of that polished capital, he returned to complete his education in a different school, and one better suited to the state of the country at that period. He exchanged his silk breeches for leathern ones, learned to navigate the immense rivers of this region, to traffic and hold talk with the Indians, to breed and train packs of hounds, to manage the spirited horses of the country, to pursue and kill the deer in the merry and noisy hunt by torchlight, and to bring down the fiercer bear and panther. Once he had penetrated overland to Mexico. Three times he had guided a skiff through the difficult channels of the Great Raft, as it is called, of the Red River, thirty leagues to the north of Natchitoches, where for eighty miles in length it drowns an immense extent of country, overlaying it with huge trunks of trees, above which wave the dwarf willows and gaudy March flowers, and around and under which creep sluggishly the innumerable and intricate currents.

My friend loved to make me ride out with him, and I believe he did it partly from a motive of vanity, that I might see how much better a horseman he was than I. We were commonly mounted on two fine mares of the Andalusian breed, fleet, spirited, with prominent veins, and eyes that shot fire like those of an Andalusian lady. Such rides as we had in the charming month of October!—for charming it is in every region of North America. We crossed the blood-colored stream of the Red River, and visited the noble prairies between it and the Washita. Let no man talk to me of the beautiful rural scenery of the Old World; I have seen it; it is beauty on a small scale, in miniature, in little spots and situations; but, if he would see beauty in its magnificence and vastness—beauty approaching to sublimity, yet not losing but rather heightening its own peculiar character—let him visit the prairies of our southwestern country; let him contemplate the long, sweeping curve of primeval forest with which they are bordered, where the huge, straight, columnar trunks are

wound with gigantic, blossoming vines, and upheave to an immense grassy ocean spread before him; on the innumerable gorgeous flowers that glow like gems among the verdure; on the clumps of towering trees planted over them at pleasant distances, as if for bowers of refreshments; and the immense rivers draining territories large enough for empires, by which they are often bounded at one extremity. Here the features of the earth are in unison with those of heaven; with the sky of tenderest blue, the edge of whose vast circle comes down seemingly into the very grass; with the wind that bends all those multitudes of flowers in one soft but mighty respiration, and with the great sun that steeps the whole in his glory.

But the scene of my story lies on the western side of the Red River; and I have no excuse for lingering thus between that stream and the Washita, save the surpassing amenity of these gardens of God, for such they are, laid out and planted and beautified by his own hand. One day I rode out with my ancient host toward the Rio Hondo, a small river wandering through dark forests in a deep channel, up to which the Spanish government formerly claimed when they extended their pretensions to the west of the Sabine. "There," said La Ruche, pointing to a placid sheet of water, over whose borders hung the peach-leaved willows of the country, "there is the Spanish Lake, and in a little time we shall be in the old Spanish town of Adayes, about ten miles distant from Natchitoches. This country is the ancient debatable ground on which the two rival colonies of France and Spain met and planted their first settlement by the side of each other." A little farther on my companion gave a wave of his hand. "There," said he, "is Adayes. The inhabitants are a good sort of people—simple, hospitable, bigoted, and ignorant; but look well to that pretty silver-mounted riding whip of yours, or you may chance not to carry it back with you." I looked, and saw a cluster of tall, clumsy houses, plastered on the outside with mud, which, peeling off in many places, showed the

logs of which they were built. We entered the town at a round pace, and then, checking our horses, passed slowly through it. The inhabitants were sitting at their doors or loitering about in the highway, for the weather had that soft, golden, autumnal serenity which makes one impatient of being anywhere but in the open air. We entered into conversation with them; they spoke nothing but Spanish, but, when I looked in their faces, and remarked the strong aboriginal cast of features, and the wild blackness of the eye in many of them, I expected every moment to be saluted in Cherokee or Choctaw. La Ruche directed my attention to their place of worship, which stood in the centre of the village. "Look at that little church," said he, "built far back in the last century. It has four bells, two or three of which are cracked, and on the religious festivals they express the public joy in the most horrid jangle you ever heard. The walls of the interior are adorned with several frightful daubs of renowned saints, which assist the devotions of the worshippers. Note it well, I beg of you, for you are to hear a story about it to-day at dinner."

We left the village and the lazy people that loitered about its old dwellings. On our way to Natchitoches we passed a fine cotton plantation, to which my friend called my particular attention. The mansion of the proprietor, with three sharp, parallel roofs, and a piazza in front, stood embowered in shade, its stuccoed walls, of a yellowish color, gleaming through the deep-green leaves of the catalpa and the shivering foliage of the China-tree. Back of it stood, in a cluster, the comfortable-looking cottages of the negroes, built of cypress timber, before which the young, woolly-headed imps of the plantation were gambolling and whooping in the sun. Still farther back lay a confused assemblage of pens, from some of which were heard the cries and snuffing of swine, and around them all was a great enclosure for the reception of cattle, in which I saw goats walking and bleating, and geese gabbling to each other and hissing at two or three dogs that moved surlily among them. My companion stopped his horse



and called my notice to a couple of fine trees of the button-wood species, or sycamore, as they are called in the western country, planted near each other before the principal door of the house. They had not yet attained their full size, and swelled with a lustiness and luxuriance of growth that bespoke the majesty and loftiness they were yet destined to attain. My friend gave me to understand that there was some romantic association connected with these trees. "*Ce sont les monumens d'un pour et tendre amour du bon vieux temps,*" said he, laying his hand on his heart, and looking as pathetically as a Frenchman can do—"but you shall hear more about it, as well as about the little old church, when we are more at leisure."

That day my venerable friend dined with more conviviality than usual. He made me taste his Château Margaux, his Medoc, his Lafitte, etc.—for these planters keep a good stock of old wines in their cellars—and insisted on my doing him reason in a glass of champagne. I had never seen him in such fine spirits. He told me anecdotes of the French court at the close of the reign of Louis XVI and the beginning of that of his successor, and sang two or three vaudevilles in a voice that was but slightly cracked, and with a sharp monotony of note. His eyes sparkled from beneath his gray eyebrows, to speak fancifully, like a bright fountain from under frost-work, and I thought I could detect a faint tinge of red coming out upon his parchment cheek like the bloom of a second youth. Suddenly he became grave. "My friend," said he, solemnly, rising and reaching forward his glass and touching the brim to mine, as is the custom of the country.

I rose also, involuntarily, awed by the earnest gravity of his manner.

"My friend, let us pledge the memory of a most excellent man, now no more, the late worthy curate of Adayes, and my ancient friend Baltazar Polo!" I did as I was requested. "Sit down, Mr. Herbert," said the old man, when he had emptied his glass; "sit down, I pray you," said he, with an

air which instantly showed me that he had recovered his vivacity, "and I will tell you a pleasant story about that same Baltazar Polo. I have been keeping it for you all day. Baltazar Polo was a native of Valencia, in old Spain, and I have heard him boast that old Gil Polo, who wrote the 'Diana Enamorada,' was of the family of his ancestors. He was educated at the university of Saragossa. Some unfortunate love affair in early life having given him a distaste for the vanities of the world, he entered into holy orders, quitted the country of his ancestors, came to New Mexico, and wandered to the remote and solitary little settlement of Adayes, where he sat himself down to take care of the souls and bodies of the simple inhabitants. He was their curate, doctor, and school-master. He taught the children their aves, and, if willing, their alphabet, said mass, helped the old nurses to cure the bilious fever, proposed riddles to the young people, and played with them at forfeits and blind-man's-buff. There his portrait hangs just before you—look at it, Herbert—a good-looking man, was he not?"

"It is a round, honest, jolly face," said I, "and not devoid of expression. There is a becoming clerical stoop in the shoulders, and his eyes are so prominent that my friend Spurzheim would set him down for a great proficient in the languages. But there is a blemish in the left eye, if I am not mistaken."

"It was put out by a blow from an angry Castilian, whom he had accidentally jostled in the streets of Madrid, and whom he was coaxing to be quiet. He was the gentlest and most kindly officious of human beings, full of good intentions, and ever attempting good works, though not always successfully. He was very absent, and so near-sighted with the only eye he had that his sphere of vision was actually, I believe, limited to the circle of a few inches. These defects kept him continually playing at a game of cross-purposes; and, if the tranquil and sleepy lives of the people of Adayes had ever been disturbed by any tendency to waggery, they might have extracted

infinite amusement from his continual blunders. I have known him to address a negro with an exhortation intended for his master, recommending courtesy to his inferiors, and good treatment and indulgence to his slaves, enlarging upon the duty of allowing them wholesome food and comfortable clothing, and of letting them go at large during the holidays. I doubt whether this black rogue was much the better for this good counsel. The next moment, perhaps, he would accost the lazy proprietor himself with a homily on the duty of obedience and alacrity in labor. He would expostulate feelingly with some pretty natural coquette of the village (whose only pride was in her own graceful shape, lustrous eyes, and crimson petticoat, and whose only ambition was to win the heart of some young beau from Natchitoches) on the folly of staking her last rag at a gaming-table; and I once heard of his lecturing an unshaven, barefooted, shirtless old Spaniard, in a poncho and tattered pair of breeches, the only ones he had in the world, on the wickedness of placing his affections on the vanities of dress.

“But, alas! there were no wags in that primitive little village, and there was no wit. The boys never stuffed with gunpowder the segars which the worthy Valencian used to smoke after dinner, nor did the men, to make him drunk, substitute brandy for the wholesome vino tinto, of which, from mere absence of mind, he would sometimes, in the company of his friends, partake rather too genially. They never thought of making any man’s natural oddities of manner or peculiarities of temper the subject of merriment, any more than the cut of his face. If ever they laughed, it was at what would excite the laughter of children—at palpable, rustic jokes and broad effrontery, at the Punchinello, as the Spaniards call Punch, from Mexico, and at the man from New Orleans who pulled so many yards of ribbon from his mouth. On the contrary, they had as high an opinion of the Reverend Father Polo’s sagacity as they justly had of his goodness. Whenever there was anything in his conduct which puzzled them, as was often the

case, they ascribed it to some reason too deep for scrutiny, and only became the more confirmed in their notion of his unfathomable wisdom. Far from comprehending any ridicule on the subject of his mistakes, they would look grave, shake their solemn Spanish heads, and say they would warrant Father Polo knew very well what he was about. This confidence in his superior understanding, fortunately, served to counteract in a good degree the effects of his continual mistakes. But it was not only among the people of Adayes that he was loved and respected. The neighboring French planters found in him an agreeable and instructive companion, and were glad of a pretext to detain him a day or two at their houses; nor was his reputation confined to this neighborhood alone, for I remember to have heard my friend Antonia de Sedilla, the venerable bishop of Louisiana, speak of him as a man of great learning and piety, and once in my presence the benevolent Polydras took occasion to extol his humanity.

“At the time of which I am speaking, the prettiest maiden of Adayes was Teresa Paccard, the daughter of a Frenchman, who had taken a wife of Spanish extraction and settled in the village. Teresa inherited much of the vivacity of our nation, and was likewise somewhat accomplished, for her father had made her learn a tolerable stock of phrases in his native language, and often took her to visit the families of the French planters; and the good Baltazar had taught her to read. At the age of sixteen she was an orphan, without fortune, and, but for the hospitality of her neighbors, without a home. Not far from the village lived a young Frenchman who had emigrated thither from the broad, airy plains of the Avoyelles, some hundred miles down the Red River, where he had followed the occupation of a herdsman. He had grown weary of watching the immense droves of cattle and horses belonging to others, and, having collected a little money, emigrated to the parish of Natchitoches, bought a few acres, and established himself in the more dignified condition of a proprietor with his old father, in a rude cabin swarming with a family of healthy brothers and sis-



ters. Richard Lemoine, then in his twentieth year, was one of the handsomest men of the province, notwithstanding his leathern doublet and small-clothes, the dress of the prairies. He was of Norman extraction, fair-haired, blue-eyed, ruddy in spite of the climate, broad-shouldered, large-limbed, with a pair of heavy Teutonic wrists, of a free port and frank speech, and such a horseman is seldom seen. He saw Teresa—

“And fell in love, of course,” said I, interrupting my host.

“And fell in love, of course,” resumed he; “and Teresa was not averse to his addresses. They first agreed to be married, and then the young lady consulted Baltazar Polo.

“‘Yes, my daughter,’ said he, ‘with all my heart. The young man is not rich, to be sure—and you are poor; but you are both industrious and virtuous; you love each other, I suppose, and I ought not to prevent you from being happy.’

“About the same time another courtship, not quite so tender, perhaps, but more prudent and well considered, was going on between a couple of maturer age and more easy circumstances. You cannot have forgotten the thrifty-looking plantation I showed you this morning, and the neat mansion, with the two young sycamores before its door. There lived at the period of my story, and there had lived for eighteen years before, Madame Labedoyere, the widow of a rich planter, childless, and just on the verge of forty. She was a country-woman of yours, an Anglo-American lady, whom Labedoyere found in one of your Atlantic cities, poor, proud, and pretty, and transplanted to the banks of the Red River, to bear rule over himself and his household, while he contented himself with ruling his field negroes. The honest man, I believe, found her a little more inclined to govern than he had expected, but, after a short struggle for his independence, in which he discovered that her temper was best when she was suffered to take her own way, he submitted, with that grace so characteristic of our nation, to what he could not remedy, endured the married state with becoming resignation, and showed himself a most obedient and exemplary husband. Ten years passed

away in wedlock, at the end of which my friend Labedoyere regained his liberty by departing for another world, where I trust he received the reward of his patience. Eight years longer his lady dwelt in solitary widowhood, as the sole inheritor of Labedoyere's large estates ; and the features of the demure maiden had settled into that of the imperious matron—a full, square face, dark, strong eyebrows, and steady, bold, black eyes, while her once sylph-like figure had rounded into a dignified and comfortable corpulency, and her light, youthful step been exchanged for the stately and swimming gate of a duchess.

“ This lady had contrived to receive the addresses of a rich old Frenchman, who lived two or three miles distant from her home, and still farther from the spot where the young Richard Lemoine had established himself with his old parents and their numerous progeny. Monsieur Du Lac was a little old gentleman of sixty years of age, an inveterate hypochondriac, and the most fretful and irritable being imaginable, with a bilious, withered face, an under-lip projecting so as to be the most conspicuous feature of his countenance, and the corners of his mouth drawn down with a perpetual grimace of discontent. No subject could be more unpromising for a woman of the disposition of Madame Labedoyere, but she was weary of having nobody but a servant to govern ; besides, she was a lady of spirit, and felt herself moved by a noble ambition of taming so intractable a creature as Monsieur Du Lac. She therefore began to treat him with extreme civility and deference, inquired with the tenderest interest the state of his health, sent him prescriptions for his maladies, and good things from her well-stored pantry, and, whenever they met, accosted him with her mildest words and softest accents, and chastised the usual terrors of her eyes into a cat-like sleepiness and languor of look. The plan succeeded ; the old gentleman's heart was taken by surprise ; he reflected how invaluable would be the attentions, the skill, and the sympathy of so kind a friend and so accomplished a nurse as Madame Labedoyere in the midst of his in-

creasing infirmities. He studied a few phrases of gallantry, and offered her his hand, which, after a proper show of coyness, hesitation, and deliberation on a step so important to the lady's happiness, was accepted.

"Thus matters were arranged between the mature and between the youthful lovers; they were to be married and to be happy, and honest Baltazar Polo, the favorite of both young and old for leagues around, was to perform the marriage ceremony. The courtship of both couples had been in autumn, and now the chilly and frosty month of January was over and the rains of February had set in, flooding the roads and swelling the streams to such a degree that nobody could think of a wedding until finer weather. The weary rains of February passed away also, and the sun of March looked out in the heavens. March is a fine month in our climate, whatever it may be in yours, Mr. Herbert. It brings bright, pleasant days and soft airs—now and then, it is true, a startling thunder-shower; but, then, such a magnificence of young vegetation, such a glory of flowers, over all the woods and the earth! You have not yet seen the spring in Louisiana, Mr. Herbert, and I assure you it is a sight worth a year's residence in the country.

"March, as I told you, had set in; the planters began to intrust to the ground the seeds of cotton and maize; fire-flies were seen to twinkle in the evening, and the dog-wood to spread its large, white blossoms, and the crimson tufts of the red-bud to burst their winter sheaths, and the azalea and yellow jasmine, and a thousand other brilliant flowers, which you shall see if you stay with us till spring, flaunted by the borders of the streams, and filled the forests with intense fragrance; and the prairies were purple with their earliest blossoms. Spring is the season of new plans and new hopes—the time for men and birds to build new habitations and marry—the time for those who are declining to the grave with sickness and old age to form plans for long years to come. I myself, amid the freshness and youthfulness of nature, and the elasticity of the air at this season, white as my hair is, some-



times forget that I am old, and almost think I shall live forever. Monsieur Du Lac grew tenderer as the sun mounted higher, the air blew softer, and the forest looked greener; he became impatient for the marriage-day, and entreated the widow to defer their mutual happiness no longer.

“‘Ah, my dear madame!’ said the withered old gentleman, in a quaking falsetto voice, ‘let us gather the flowers of existence before they are faded; let us enjoy the spring of life!’ It was impossible for the gentle widow to resist such ardent solicitation, and she consented that the nuptial rights should be delayed no longer.

“Nearly at the same time that this tender scene was passing, Richard Lemoine also, in phrases less select but by no means less impassioned, pressed the lovely Teresa, and not in vain, to a speedy union. But it was already near the close of the carnival, and but two or three days intervened before the commencement of Lent—that long, melancholy fast, in which, for the space of forty days, the Catholic Church forbids the happy ceremony of marriage. I have often thought that, if the observances of our Church had been regulated with a particular view to the climate of Louisiana, the fast of Lent would have been put a month or two earlier in the calendar; but I am no divine, and do not presume to give my profane opinion upon this delicate and sacred subject. Neither did the four lovers; but it was agreed by them all that they could not possibly wait until Lent was over, and the only alternative was to be married before it began.

“In the mean time, it seemed as if all the inhabitants of the parish of Natchitoches, who had the misfortune to be single, had formed the resolution of entering into the state of wedlock before the carnival ended. They came flocking in couples, of various nations, ages, and complexions, to the church of Adayes, to be married by the good Baltazar Polo; and that year was long afterward remembered in the parish of Natchitoches, under the name of *l’an des noces*—‘the year of weddings.’



“‘Do you know, Richard,’ said Teresa to her lover, on his proposing that the wedding ceremony should take place the next day, ‘do you know that Father Polo has promised, on the day after to-morrow, which is the last day of the carnival, to begin at four o’clock in the morning, and to marry at the same mass all who shall present themselves at the church of Adayes? It is so awkward to be married with everybody staring at one; but, if we are married in company with a dozen others, they cannot laugh at us, you know. Let it, therefore, be the day after to-morrow, dear Richard, and as early in the morning as you please, for the earlier we go to the church, the darker it will be; and I should like, of all things, to be married in the dark.’ Richard could not but assent to so reasonable a proposal, and departed to make his little arrangements at home for the reception of his bride.

“It is somewhat remarkable that Madame Labedoyere, notwithstanding she was as little liable to the charge of excessive timidity and superfluous coyness as any of her sex, should also have insisted on being married on the morning of the last day of the carnival. Her gallant and venerable suitor contended most tenderly and perseveringly against this proposal, urging the propriety of their being united in broad daylight, with the decorum and ceremonies proper to the occasion; but he was forced to yield the point at last, as the lady declared that, unless the marriage took place at the time she proposed, it must be delayed until after Lent; and to this alternative Monsieur Du Lac was too gallant and impatient a lover to agree. I believe that Madame was sensible of the queer figure her withered, weak-legged, and sour-visaged Adonis would make as principal in a marriage ceremony, and was willing he should escape observation among the crowd of bridegrooms whom she expected the last day of the carnival would bring to the church of Adayes.

“At length the day arrived. At half-past three in the morning the sexton threw open the doors of the little log church, and awoke the village with a most furious and dis-

cordant peal on the cracked bells. The good Baltazar Polo appeared at the appointed hour, and the building began to fill with the candidates for matrimony and their relatives. Couple came flocking in after couple. Here you might see by the light of the lanterns, which the negroes stood holding at the door, a young fellow in a short cloak and broad-brimmed palmetto hat and feathers, with a face in which were mingled the features of Spain with those of the aborigines, walking with an indifferent and listless air, and supporting a young woman, whose rounder and more placid, though not less dark, countenance was half covered by the manto or thick Spanish veil, which, however, was not drawn so closely over her forehead as to hide the cluster of natural blossoms she had gathered that morning and placed there. There you might see a simpering fair one, with a complexion somewhat too rosy for our climate, and a wreath of artificial flowers in her hand, stepping briskly into the church on pointed toe, leaning on the arm of her betrothed, whose liveliness of look and air needed not the help of his cocked hat and powdered locks and long-skirted coat of sky-blue, to tell he was a Frenchman. In others, you might remark a whimsical blending of costume, and a perplexing amalgamation of the features of different races, that denoted their mixed origin. Nearly all came protected with ample clothing against the inclemency of the weather, which, lately mild and serene, had changed during the course of the night to cold and damp, with a strong wind driving across the sky vast masses of vapor of a shadowy and indistinct outline. Fourteen couple at length took their place in the nave of the church in two opposite rows, with a sufficient space between them for the priest to pass in performing the marriage ceremony. Back of these rows stood the friends and relations of the parties, waiting for the moment when the rites should be concluded, to conduct the brides to the homes of the bridegrooms. The interior of the church was dimly lighted by two wax tapers that stood on the altar. A storm was evidently rising without; the sky seemed to grow darker

every moment as the day advanced, the wind swept in gusts round the building, and rushed in eddies through the open door, waving the flame of the tapers to and fro. As the flickering light played over the walls, it showed on one side of the altar a picture of our Lady of Grief, *La Virgen de los Dolores*, the very caricature of sorrow, and on the other a representation of the holy St. Anthony tempted by evil spirits, in which the painter's ingenuity had been exerted so successfully as to puzzle the most sagacious spectator to tell which was the ugliest, the saint or the devils—or, indeed, to distinguish the devils from the saint. Farther off were one or two other pictures, whose grim and shadowy faces, in the imperfect and unsteady glare of the tapers, seemed to frown suddenly on the walls, and then as suddenly shrink into the shade. The horses which the company rode, and which stood about the door, held by negroes or fastened to posts and saplings, pawed and neighed, and champed their huge Spanish bits, as if to give their riders notice of the approaching tempest. Father Polo saw, or rather was informed by the friends of the parties, that there was no time to be lost if he intended that the brides should reach their new habitations that morning in comfort and safety. He therefore passed between the rows of the betrothed, performing the ceremony rapidly as he went, and handing over each of the ladies, as he put the wedding-ring on her finger, to the friends of her husband, who conducted her out of the church. Close together stood Monsieur Du Lac and Richard Lemoine, and opposite them Madame Labedoyere and Teresa Paccard. The latter were both in cloaks, a circumstance sufficient in itself to cause them to be mistaken for each other by a person so absent and near-sighted as Baltazar Polo. He put the ring of Monsieur Du Lac on the hand of Teresa Paccard, and that of Richard Lemoine on the hand of Madame Labedoyere, and, as they drew their cloaks over their faces, preparing to face the wind without, handed them to those whom he supposed to be the friends of their respective spouses. Madame Labedoyere was given in charge to the relatives of

Lemoine. They placed her on a fleet horse, brought by the young man from the Avoyelles, and went off at a quick pace, attended by two or three of his brothers and sisters. Teresa was seated on a soft-footed, ambling nag, bought by Du Lac expressly for the use of his widow, and departed in company with an old planter, a cousin of Du Lac, a negro who rode after them on horseback, and three or four more who trotted on foot behind them.

“In consequence of the high wind, the roaring of the woods, and the haste made to escape the storm, there was little conversation between the brides and their attendants, and nothing occurred to make them suspect the mistake until they reached the habitations of the bridegrooms.

“Teresa arrived with her escort at the place of her supposed destination just as the clouds had settled into a solid mass all over the sky, and were shedding down the first drops of rain. By the imperfect light—for, although the sun was rising, the thickness of the gathering storm still maintained a sort of twilight in the atmosphere—she could distinguish a sort of vastness in the walls of the building she was approaching that did not agree with her ideas of the cabin of Richard; and the shrubs and trees about it, waving low and sighing heavily in the violent wind, betokened the seat of an ancient dwelling. She had, however, no time to speculate upon the matter; and the temporary misgivings which these appearances forced upon her were forgotten in her eagerness to obtain a shelter. Her ancient attendant, with more briskness than the stiff formality of his figure would have warranted her to expect, alighted, and assisted her from her pony; the negro had flung himself from his horse and opened the door; and Teresa in an instant was within the house. Here she was met by half a dozen domestic negroes, with shining, jetty faces, grinning and welcoming their new mistress with bows and courtesies. One took her cloak, another ushered her into a spacious apartment, a third sprang before her and placed a chair, and a fourth presented a looking-glass, by which to adjust her hair,



disordered in the haste of her ride. She threw a hurried glance at her own image, but the furniture of the room, so different from what she expected to see, more strongly attracted her attention, and she quickly handed back the mirror. She saw that she was sitting in an arm-chair, with a seat and fringe of crimson silk, and the back and legs ornamented with a profusion of heavy carving and tarnished gilding. Several others of the same description were scattered around, and a large, comfortable-looking sofa, covered with faded damask, stood under a huge looking-glass, carved and gilt after the same fashion with the chairs, but unluckily cracked in its voyage from France. The glass leaned majestically forward into the room, so as to reflect every inch of a floor smoothly paved with French bricks, the fashion of the day. On another side of the wall hung two family portraits, in big wigs and bright armor. This magnificence was curiously contrasted with the stout cedar table in the middle of the room, with half a dozen coarse wooden chairs scattered about, and a clumsy chest of drawers, the work of some rude artificer of the country. The table, however, presented a most sumptuous *déjeuner à la fourchette*—coffee, claret, the delicate bar-fish, trout, duck-pies, the favorite dishes of the country, with others, which I will leave you, who know something of French cookery, to imagine to yourself, served up on massy old plate.

“‘Ah!’ said Teresa to herself, ‘this surely cannot be Richard’s house, or is it possible that he has been amusing himself with my simplicity, and that he is a rich man after all?’

“Her doubts were of short duration. The door opened, and a vinegar-faced old gentleman, with an olive complexion, shrunken legs, and attenuated figure, presented himself. The solemn gentleman who had hitherto attended Teresa arose, and, with infinite solemnity, announced Monsieur Du Lac, the bridegroom, to Madame Du Lac, the bride. The poor girl turned red, and then pale, and seemed ready to sink into the earth with embarrassment and anxiety. The old gentleman

himself stood for a moment motionless with surprise, and then, appearing to recollect himself, he advanced and took the hand of Teresa, who felt almost afraid to withdraw it from a gentleman so aged that he reminded her of her grandfather.

“‘Ah, madame,’ said he, coughing, ‘forgive my awkwardness—but I was so surprised! How much you are changed since I saw you last evening! you are more than twice as young, and ten times more beautiful.’

“‘Indeed, sir,’ interrupted Teresa, eagerly, ‘there is no change, I can assure you—I am the same that I ever was—there is some error here—something very extraordinary.’

“‘Extraordinary, my princess; well may you call it so; it is one of the most extraordinary things I ever witnessed in the course of my life, and I have seen fifty years;’ here the old gentleman told the truth, though by no means the whole truth; ‘nothing less than a miracle could have produced—and yet it may be a miracle, my dear madame, the saints are so good!’

“‘Ah, sir,’ said the poor girl, ‘do not mock me, I pray you; I perceive here has been a sad mistake—let me go to my Richard, I entreat you, let me go to my Richard.’

“As she spoke, she arose, and made an effort to withdraw her hand, of which, however, the ancient swain retained obstinate possession. Much as he was struck with her beauty at first sight, he grew more charmed with it as he gazed upon her round, youthful figure, her polished forehead, her finely moulded cheeks, now flushed with an unusual crimson, and her full black eyes, in each of which a tear was gathering. He determined not to give up so fine a creature without an effort to retain her.

“‘May I take the liberty of inquiring,’ said he, ‘whom you call your Richard?’

“‘It is Richard Lemoine,’ answered the young woman, ‘who lives down by the Poplars. I married him this morning.’

“‘I beg ten thousand pardons, madame, but you married me this morning, and here is my ring on your finger—my grandmother’s wedding-ring, with the finest diamonds in the colony, and the pretty motto, *Jusqu’ à la mort*, which I hope is a great way off; at least, I am sure it is, if I can get rid of this troublesome cough. Ah, my adorable princess, we may both imagine that there is a mistake in this affair, and yet it may be all right—indeed, I am confident it is. The kind heavens have destined us for each other. I certainly expected to marry a different person, but Providence has willed it otherwise, and I am most happy to submit to its dispensations. I hope you will have as little reason to complain of them as I. We are united, I trust, for a long and happy life, and the marriage-knot, you know, is indissoluble; marriage is too solemn a thing, madame, to be trifled with, as I presume you are sensible—’

“Here Monsieur Du Lac was obliged, by a violent fit of coughing, to break off his discourse. But Teresa had sunk back into the chair, and, covering her face with her handkerchief, was sobbing violently. The old man tried every method he could think of to reconcile her to what he called her destiny, in which he was zealously seconded by his friend the old planter. He made her presents of necklaces and jewels, and various other fineries which he had intended as nuptial gifts to the fair widow; he enlarged on the comforts of his mansion, the extent of his plantation, the ease and opulence she would enjoy; vowed that his existence should be devoted to her service, and that her slightest wish should be the law of his conduct; and finally hinted that Richard doubtless knew very well what he was about in the affair; that he had probably intrigued with the widow, and that the perfidious beings were now in some snug corner, congratulating themselves on the success of their wicked stratagem. Monsieur Du Lac’s grave old cousin re-enforced this last argument by declaring his solemn belief that it was true, and it affected what none of the others could. How could Teresa

refuse to believe two such old and apparently honest men? The offended beauty dried her tears, consented to look on the rich adornments for her person presented by her venerable lover, and finally suffered herself to be led to her seat at the head of the breakfast-table.

"The widow, in the mean time, was more rapidly conveyed to her place of destination on the fine, fleet animal which Richard brought from the Avoyelles, a gentle but spirited creature, broken by him for the use of his sisters. They rode so rapidly that they seemed to leave the huge, low-hung clouds behind them; and, although Richard's habitation was at a considerably greater distance from the church than that of Monsieur Du Lac, they reached home quite as soon. What was the surprise of the lady on entering the house: the room into which she was ushered was floored with loose planks; a huge naked chimney yawned in the midst, where two or three cypress-logs were smouldering; the naked rafters of the ceiling were stained with smoke; and a few old chests, a dozen joint-stools, and two clumsy arm-chairs were the only furniture of the apartment. A flaxen-haired girl assisted her to take off her cloak, and, as she stood in the majesty of her rustling silk and glittering jewels, an elderly couple—a white-bearded man of sixty, in a leathern doublet, and a thin matron of ten years younger, in a coarse white-cotton cap and blue-cotton short-gown and petticoat—who had risen upon her entrance, began to bow and courtesy with an involuntary and profound respect.

"'What a fine lady she is!' said the old woman to her husband.

"'What an old wife Richard has got!' whispered to one of her brothers the flaxen-haired girl, who had helped her off with her cloak.

"In the mean time, the stern lady stood regarding the group with a look of unutterable disdain. Her bold, black eyes flashed fire as she pushed aside the big arm-chair that was offered her. 'Where am I?' she exclaimed. 'Why am I



brought to this place? I am sure this is not my husband's house; take me thither instantly.'

"'Where is my wife?' said Richard, who just then entered the door. 'Who is that lady?'

"'That is your wife,' answered one of the boys; 'that is the lady the minister handed us.'

"'And a fine lady she is,' added Richard's mother; 'I warrant, the whole country can not show a finer.'

"'But I am not your wife,' said Madame Labedoyere, fixing her resolute eyes on Richard. 'I demand to be taken back to my husband. I will not remain another moment in this miserable hut.'

"'You say true,' replied Richard, 'you are not my wife. I married a younger, and, thank heaven, a prettier woman. But you must consent to play the hostage here, madame, till I get her. There is some cursed blunder in the business. You claim your husband, I claim my bride—my Teresa. I declare that you shall not stir from this house until she is restored to me.'

"'Ah, I see how it is, my son,' interrupted Richard's mother; 'the good one-eyed Baltazar has made a mistake, and given you the wrong lady.'

"'Then the good one-eyed Baltazar must give me the right one!' retorted Richard. 'What right had the old blunderer to rob me of my pretty Teresa? What business had he to give her to another man, and fob me off with a fine lady, as you call her, who is old enough to be my mother? But I will go after him, and force him to make restitution—if I do not, I wish I may never mount a horse again. Brothers, look well to that lady with her silks and jewels, and do not let her leave the house till I come back.'

"So saying, Richard flung out at the door, though the rain drove in heavy torrents against the windows, and his mother screamed out to him that he would certainly catch his death by venturing forth in such a storm. He sprang upon his horse, and was soon at the curate's, where he was admitted to

an instant conference with Baltazar Polo. The good man tried at first to convince him that it was impossible for any mistake to have been committed, as he was very confident that he had put every particular ring upon the hand of the lady for whom it was intended, and accurately handed the brides to their respective bridegrooms. This, however, only served to work up into fury the exasperation of Richard, who asked him if he supposed everybody was as near-sighted as himself, and whether he thought he could not tell a woman of forty from a girl of eighteen. The clergyman then inquired of the young man if he knew the name of the person whom the lady he had left at home intended to have married, as it was possible that Teresa might have been carried to his house by mistake. On this point Richard was wholly ignorant, having neglected to inform himself before he set out, nor did he even know the name of the lady. He saw, however, that there was a good deal of reason in Baltazar's suggestion, and departed with a determination to make the necessary inquiries of the unknown matron.

"It occurred to him, however, that he would not leave the village of Adayes, in which Father Polo resided, without first calling at the late home of Teresa, to see if its inmates could tell what had become of her. They could give him no information. They had neither seen nor heard anything of her since she left them that morning, at an early hour, dressed for the marriage ceremony. He then ran to the church, which he entered with a vague hope that he might yet find her within it. Nobody was there but the sexton, and the grim, bearded, unsympathizing saints on the walls, who seemed to stare in the most unfeeling manner on his anguish. There, too, was the Virgin de los Dolores, still occupied only with her own ancient griefs, regardless of his newer and keener distress. He felt as if he could have torn them from the walls where they hung. Leaving the church, he put his horse to its full speed, and came home, wet to the skin, amid a cloud of vapor arising from the perspiration of the animal.

“Madame Labedoyere, in the mean time, had borne her detention at Richard’s house more patiently on account of the storm which was raging without, and which infallibly would have spoiled, or at least sadly disordered, her wedding-dress, had she ventured to encounter it. Richard found her, on his return, seated somewhat sullenly in the arm-chair which she had accepted on his departure, and his mother and sisters busied in their usual occupations, though somewhat more silent than wont, for they were awed by the strange lady’s imperious manner, and that splendor of costume which had never before been seen within those walls. The lady’s reflections, in the mean time, however, had not been much to Richard’s disadvantage. If he recovered Teresa, she was sure to have Monsieur Du Lac restored to her; but, if otherwise, it struck her that the young fellow’s manly frame and blooming face were no inadequate compensation for the loss of the old gentleman’s possessions. He was poor, it is true, but she was, in fact, rich enough for both; and she began to think that, after all, she might not be so very wretched in his society. Immediately on entering, Richard inquired of the lady her name, and that of the gentleman whom she went to the church to marry; and a family council was held to consider what should be done, at which the stately widow graciously condescended to assist. It was finally settled that Richard should proceed with his father to the house of Monsieur Du Lac, to induce him to restore the young bride, who had doubtless been conducted thither by mistake; and, in case of the success of the embassy, Madame Labedoyere received an assurance that she should be duly conveyed to the mansion of her venerable lover. Some time elapsed in making these arrangements, but at length the old gentleman and his son set off together. The father was a slow rider, and Richard often found himself far before him on the road, and heard himself called to slacken his pace. Du Lac’s house lay in a direction from the church of Adayes exactly opposite to that of Richard’s, and, consequently, at a considerable distance from the latter. In vain

the young man represented to old Lemoine that, at the rate they were travelling, it would be impossible to reach the place before nightfall.

“‘No matter, Richard,’ replied the old man; ‘if you get there before bedtime, it will be time enough, I take it. You know, I have never ridden any faster these ten years, and I hope you would not have your father turn jockey and break his neck in his old age. Rein in your horse, can’t you, and stop kicking him in the side, and keep back along with me.’

“Oh, what a long journey that was for poor Richard! They arrived at Du Lac’s house, however, while the twilight was yet in the western sky. The rain was over, and the thin, vapory clouds were crimson with the latest of those hues which foretell a fair day on the morrow. They knocked at Du Lac’s door, and it was opened by a negro, who told them that his master was just gone to bed with his new wife.

“‘And who is his wife?’ asked Richard, quickly.

“‘A very handsome and very young woman,’ said the negro in his Creole-French, ‘whom master brought home with him to-day.’

“Richard’s heart sank within him when he heard this answer, nor had he the voice or the courage to ask any more questions; but his father pursued the inquiry. The black informed them that the bride was a beautiful creature about eighteen years of age, that his master was married to her that very morning, that he understood her name was Teresa, that she was from the Spanish village of Adayes, that she wept very much when she first came to the house, but that before night she seemed very happy and contented.

“Richard, in the mean time, listened with feelings that are indescribable. ‘Let us go home,’ said he to his father. ‘I see how it is; the girl has tricked me.’ The old gentleman commanded him to stay, and, turning to the servant, said, ‘I must speak with your master.’

“‘You cannot,’ answered the negro; ‘he gave strict orders not to be disturbed.’



“‘Don’t tell me I cannot, you black rascal!’ said the old Louisianian, in a terrible voice, his blood beginning to warm in behalf of his son; ‘go and tell your master that I must speak with him immediately!’

“The black went, and soon returned with a civil message from Monsieur Du Lac, giving the Messieurs Lemoine to understand that this was his wedding-night, that he had retired to rest, and begged not to be disturbed; but that on the next morning he would be exceedingly happy to wait upon the gentlemen, and execute any commands with which they might please to honor him.

“The ancient herdsman, while this message was delivering, drew himself up to his full height, which exceeded six feet, and presented a figure of weather-beaten strength such as we have few examples of at the present day—tall, bony, grim, and broad-shouldered. ‘Go,’ said he, in a voice which thundered through the half-open door, and resounded along the passages of the dwelling, ‘tell your master I will speak to him, or I will batter down his house about his ears!’ The domestic again disappeared, and in a moment afterward an upper window opened, a head covered with a woollen night-cap was thrust out, and a sharp-keyed, infirm voice demanded what they wanted at that time of night.

“Old Lemoine answered that he thought it a very proper time of night, and proceeded to state the nature of his errand; spoke of the mistake that had occurred, and the desire of his son to rectify it; said that Richard had come with him to claim his betrothed bride, and that he stood ready to restore to Monsieur Du Lac the lady whom he had intended to marry.

“‘There is no mistake whatever in the matter,’ answered Du Lac from the window; ‘I am well satisfied with the match as it is, and I can answer for the young lady, that she makes no objections. She is my wife, regularly married to me at the church, and wears my ring on her finger at this moment. As for the widow Labedoyere, I am sure the young man is

perfectly welcome to her, and I wish them a great deal of happiness.'

"'But he does not want the widow, and is come for the young lady.'

"'Oh, he wants my wife, does he? he is come to steal her from my bed on the wedding-night? Young gentleman, you have set out upon this errand a little too soon. It is not the custom for gallants like you to run away with other people's wives until the lady has lived with her husband a few days at least. And you, Monsieur Lemoine, as I think you call yourself, I wonder you are not ashamed of abetting your son in such a wicked business. No, no, gentlemen, my wife is my wife, and I shall keep her. I have the honor to wish you a very good-night.' Saying this, he shut the window, and the negro at the same instant fastened and bolted the door below.

"What was to be done! Old Lemoine was in a great rage, and talked of bursting open the door and penetrating into Du Lac's chamber, to ascertain from the young woman herself the truth of his story. Richard was inclined to abandon all further pursuits of one who had proved herself fickle, ungrateful, and worthless. As a sort of middle course, it was finally agreed to go to Baltazar Polo, to rate him soundly for what he had done, and see if he had any counsel to offer. The good pastor received them with his usual benignity, and listened mildly to their complaints. 'My friends,' said he, 'I should the more regret the error I have committed did I not see in it a particular and benevolent providence. I cannot alter what Heaven has done; Madame Labedoyere is your wife, and Teresa is united to Monsieur Du Lac. But come to me to-morrow morning; I will send for the other couple, and will endeavor to adjust the matter to your satisfaction.'

"The next morning early the four newly married people were at the house of Baltazar Polo. You know, perhaps, Mr. Herbert, that, by the marital law of Louisiana, neither the husband has any title to the real or personal property of the wife, nor the wife to that of the husband; and therefore, although

both Monsieur Du Lac and Madame Labedoyere were rich, yet if they had died the next day, or after ten years of matrimony, both their young spouses would have been left as poor as they were before the marriage.

“‘We have made a great blunder,’ said the curate, ‘by which the original intentions of all parties have been frustrated. You,’ said he, addressing himself to the old people, ‘have been the gainers by this accident, and these young folks have been the losers; you must therefore make them a compensation. Let Monsieur Du Lac settle half his large estates on his young wife here, and you, madame, half yours on your young husband, and on this condition the marriages shall remain as they are.’

“None of the party seemed at first exactly pleased with this arrangement, but the curate was peremptory. Du Lac could not think of giving up Teresa; and Madame Labedoyere, when she saw the handsome Richard by the side of his withered and crooked competitor, could not help congratulating herself fervently on the exchange; a notary, therefore, was sent for, the instruments of settlement were executed on the spot, and the parties withdrew—Teresa with Du Lac, and Richard with Madame Labedoyere, now become Madame Lemoine, in whose house he was to establish himself.

“That very evening both the young persons had a sample of the disposition and temper of their spouses. You know something of the custom of *charivari*, which prevails in all the French colonies of North America. It is a way we have of celebrating odd, unequal, unsuitable matches. It was hardly dark when the tumult of the *charivari* was heard from a distance by the inmates of Madame Lemoine’s dwelling. Horns winded, whistles blown, tin kettles beaten with sticks, a jangle of bells, and a medley of discordant voices was heard on the wind, and, when the crowd came in sight, torches were seen flaming and smoking over their heads. As the procession drew near, it was observed to be headed by two grotesque masked figures, the one representing a fat, staring, bold-faced old woman, and the other a lubberly, foolish-looking young bumpkin, who at

intervals kissed and embraced each other lovingly, and with abundance of awkward gesticulations. A broad-chested fellow, marching after them, thundered out a halting ballad, with a chorus in which the whole procession joined, and in which the names of Richard and his spouse were duly commemorated. That fearless lady, however, took her measures with her usual spirit; she posted her negroes at the windows, gave them their orders, and was fully prepared for the arrival of the party. The procession at length reached the house, and came to a halt before the door, when immediately one, dressed in a fantastic garb much like that of a clown at a theatre, and who acted as marshal of the ceremonies, stepped forward, and, with a wand which he carried in his hand, gave a most furious rap on the door. That was the signal for the besieged to ply their weapons of defence; the windows were suddenly opened, vessels of dirty water were emptied into the faces of the procession, sticks, rotten eggs, and other missiles were thrown at them, and a couple of fowling-pieces were discharged over their heads. They fled precipitately, leaving on the field their instruments of music, which the servants afterward picked up and brought in as trophies of the victory they had gained.

“Whether it was by the same party or not, I cannot say; but the wedding of Monsieur Du Lac was celebrated with similar honors, and under more lucky auspices for those by whom they were rendered. The old gentleman submitted to the custom with so bad a grace that they were encouraged to take greater liberties; the serenaders entered his house, deafened his ears with their horrid music, drank gallons of his best wine, and one of them, a strapping young fellow, had even the impudence to snatch a kiss from the bride. It was one o'clock in the morning before these rude wassailers left the house, and then the vexation of old Du Lac, which had been so long restrained by their presence, broke forth into fury. He stormed at his negroes, cursed the neighborhood, railed at everybody whose name was mentioned, or who came



into his presence ; nor did he even spare his wife ; he told her he wished he had married Madame Labedoyere, and then none of all this trouble could have happened.

“Teresa was never destined to see him in good-humor again. He had broken, on that evening, through that reserve of first acquaintance which produces civility even in the peevish and morose, and ever afterward he treated her as he did the other inmates of the family—with an intolerable and perpetual ill-humor. In three years he fretted himself into his grave, notwithstanding all the pains which the gentle Teresa took to keep him alive, leaving her the owner of half his possessions, and the mother of two children, who inherited the other half.

“As for the matron, with whom Richard was paired so much against his inclination, she could never reduce the young man to that state of obedience which she esteemed the proper relation of a husband to the wife of his bosom. Richard insisted firmly on maintaining his parents in comfort and educating his sisters, and she insisted as strongly that he should not. He carried his intentions into effect, at the expense of a daily quarrel with his wife. This vain contest for the supremacy preyed upon her spirits and impaired her health, her portly figure wasted visibly, she went into a deep decline, and died at the end of five years from the time of her marriage, having also borne two children to her husband.

“And now, Mr. Herbert, you anticipate the conclusion of my story. You are right ; Richard and Teresa were united at last, and the marriage ceremony was performed in the little old church of Adayes, by the benevolent curate, my right worthy friend, Baltazar Polo ; and never did those cracked bells ring a merrier peal than at that wedding. It was performed with more than usual precaution, for the good minister declared that no second mistake should be committed if it was possible to guard against it by human means. It took place at broad noon, on a clear, bright day, and the curate wore a new pair of concave spectacles, which he had procured from New Orleans expressly for the occasion.

“The worthy couple are now like myself—grown old. They live on the fertile plantation which formerly belonged to Madame Labedoyere, where I showed you the two fine young button-wood trees before the mansion. The children of the first marriage are provided for on the ample estates of the deceased parents, and Lemoine and his wife live surrounded by their mutual offspring in the serene old age of a quiet and well-acted life. Some years since, a French botanist, traveling in this country, claimed the hospitality of their roof. He showed them, among other matters connected with his science, how the leaf of the button-wood hides in its footstalk the bud of the next year’s leaf. Richard told his wife that this was an emblem of their first unfortunate marriage, which, however, contrary to their expectations, contained within itself the germ of their present happy union and their present opulence. They adopted the tree as their favorite among all the growths of the forest, and caused two of them, of equal size and similar shape, to be planted before their door.”

## THE SKELETON'S CAVE.

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### I.

WE hold our existence at the mercy of the elements; the life of man is a state of continual vigilance against their warfare. The heats of noon would wither him like the severed herb, the chills and dews of night would fill his bones with pain, the winter frost would extinguish life in an hour, the hail would smite him to death—did he not seek shelter and protection against them. His clothing is the perpetual armor he wears for his defence, and his dwelling the fortress to which he retreats for safety. Yet, even there the elements attack him; the winds overthrow his habitation; the waters sweep it away. The fire, that warmed and brightened it within, seizes upon its walls and consumes it, with his wretched family. The earth, where she seems to spread a paradise for his abode, sends up death in exhalations from her bosom; and the heavens dart down lightnings to destroy him. The drought consumes the harvests on which he relied for sustenance, or the rains cause the green corn to “rot ere its youth attains a beard.” A sudden blast engulfs him in the waters of the lake or bay from which he seeks his food; a false step or a broken twig precipitates him from the tree which he had climbed for its fruit; oaks falling in the storm, rocks toppling down from the precipices, are so many dangers which beset his life. Even his erect attitude is a continual affront to the great law of gravitation, which is sometimes fatally avenged

when he loses the balance preserved by constant care and falls on a hard surface. The very arts on which he relies for protection from the unkindness of the elements betray him to the fate he would avoid, in some moment of negligence, or by some misdirection of skill, and he perishes miserably by his own inventions. Amid these various causes of accidental death, which thus surround us at every moment, it is only wonderful that their proper effect is not oftener produced—so admirably has the Framer of the universe adapted the faculties by which man provides for his safety to the perils of the condition in which he is placed. Yet there are situations in which all his skill and strength are vain to protect him from a violent death, by some unexpected chance which executes upon him a sentence as severe and inflexible as the most pitiless tyranny of human despotism. But I began with the intention of relating a story, and I will not, by my reflections, anticipate the catastrophe of my narrative.

One pleasant summer morning a party of three persons set out from a French settlement in the western region of the United States to visit a remarkable cavern in its vicinity. They had already proceeded for the distance of about three miles, through the tall original forest, along a path so rarely trodden that it required all their attention to keep its track. They now perceived through the trees the sunshine at a distance, and, as they drew nearer, they saw that it came down into a kind of natural opening at the foot of a steep precipice. At every step the vast wall seemed to rise higher and higher; its seams and fissures and inequalities became more and more distinct; and far up, nearly midway from the bottom, appeared a dark opening, under an impending crag. The precipice seemed between two and three hundred feet in height, and quite perpendicular. At its base, the earth for several rods around was heaped with loose fragments of rock, which had evidently been detached from the principal mass and shivered to pieces in the fall. A few trees, among which were the black walnut and the slippery elm, and here and there an oak,



grew scattered among the rocks, and attested, by their dwarfish stature, the ungrateful soil in which they had taken root. But the wild grape-vines which trailed along the ground, and sent out their branches to overrun the trees around them, showed by their immense size how much they delighted in the warmth of the rocks and the sunshine. The *celastrus*, also, here and there had wound its strong rings round and round the trunks and the boughs, till they died in its embrace, and then clothed the leafless branches in a thick drapery of its own foliage. Into this open space the party at length emerged from the forest, and for a moment stopped.

"Yonder is the Skeleton's Cave," said one of them, who stood a little in front of the rest. As he spoke he raised his arm and pointed to the dark opening in the precipice already mentioned.

The speaker was an aged man, of spare figure, and a mild, subdued expression of countenance. Whoever looked at his thin, gray hairs, his stooping form, and the emaciated hand which he extended, might have taken him for one who had passed the Scripture limit of threescore years and ten; but a glance at his clear and bright hazel eye would have induced the observer to set him down at some five years younger. A broad-brimmed palmetto hat shaded his venerable features from the sun, and his black gown and rosary denoted him to be an ecclesiastic of the Roman faith.

The two persons whom he addressed were much younger. One of them was in the prime of manhood and personal strength, rather tall, and of a vigorous make. He wore a hunting cap, from the lower edge of which curled a profusion of strong dark hair, rather too long for the usual mode in the Atlantic States, shading a fresh-colored countenance, lighted by a pair of full black eyes, the expression of which was compounded of boldness and good-humor. His dress was a blue frock-coat trimmed with yellow fringe, and bound by a sash at the waist, deer-skin pantaloons, and deer-skin moccasins. He carried a short rifle on his left shoulder, and wore on his

left side a leathern bag of rather ample dimensions, and on his right side a powder-flask. It was evident that he was either a hunter by occupation, or at least one who made hunting his principal amusement; and there was something in his air and the neatness of his garb and equipments that bespoke the latter.

On the arm of this person leaned the third individual of the party, a young woman apparently about nineteen or twenty years of age, slender and graceful, as a youthful student of the classic poets might imagine a wood-nymph. She was plainly attired in a straw hat and a dress of russet-color, fitted for a ramble through that wild forest. The faces of her two companions were decidedly French in their physiognomy, as her face was as decidedly Anglo-American. Her brown hair was parted away from a forehead of exceeding fairness, more compressed on the sides than is usual with the natives of England, and showing in the profile that approach to the Grecian outline which is remarked among their descendants in America. To complete the picture, imagine a quiet blue eye, features delicately moulded, and just color enough on her cheek to make it interesting to watch its changes as it deepened or grew paler with the varying and flitting emotions which slight cause will call up in a youthful maiden's bosom.

Notwithstanding this difference of national physiognomy, there was nothing peculiar in her accent as she answered the old man who had just spoken.

"I see the mouth of the cave, but how are we to reach it, Father Ambrose? I perceive no way of getting to it without wings, either from the bottom or the top of the precipice."

"Look a few rods to the right, Emily. Do you see that pile of broken rocks reaching up to the middle of the precipice, looking as if a huge column of that mighty wall had been shattered into a pyramid of fragments? Our path lies that way."

"I see it, Father," returned the fair questioner; "but, when

we arrive at the top, it appears to me we shall be no nearer the cave than we now are."

"From the top of that pile you may perceive a horizontal seam in the precipice extending to the mouth of the cave. Along that line, though you cannot discern it from the place where we stand, is a safe and broad footing, leading to our place of destination. Do you see, *Le Maire*," continued Father Ambrose, addressing himself to his other companion, "do you see that eagle sitting so composedly on a bough of that leafless tree, which seems a mere shrub on the brow of the precipice, directly over the cavern? Nay, never lift your rifle, my good friend; the bird is beyond your reach, and you will only waste your powder. The superfluous rains which fall on the highlands beyond are collected in the hollow over which hangs the tree I showed you, and pour down the face of the rock directly over the entrance of the cave. Generally you will see the bed of that hollow perfectly dry, as it is at present, but during a violent shower, or after several days' rain, there descends from that spot a sheet of water, white as snow, deafening with its noise the quiet solitudes around us, and rivalling in beauty some of the cascades that tumble from the cliffs of the Alps. But let us proceed."

The old man led the party to the pile of rocks which he had pointed out to their notice, and began to ascend from one huge block to another with an agility scarcely impaired by age. They could now perceive that human steps had trodden that rough path before them; in some places the ancient moss was effaced from the stones, and in others their surfaces had been worn smooth. Emily was about to follow her venerable conductor, when *Le Maire* offered to assist her.

"Nay, uncle," said she, "I know you are the politest of men, but I think your rifle will give you trouble enough. I have often heard you call it your wife; so I beg you will wait on *Madame Le Maire*, and leave me to make the best of my way by myself. I am not now to take my first lesson in climbing rocks, as you well know."

"Well, if this rifle be my spouse," rejoined the hunter, "I will say that it is not every wife who has so devoted a husband, nor every husband who is fortunate enough to possess so true a wife. She has another good quality—she never speaks but when she is bid, and then always to the point. I only wish, for your sake, since I am not permitted to assist you, that Henry Danville were here. I think we should see the wildness of the paces that carry you so lightly over these rocks a little chastised while the young gentleman tenderly and respectfully handed you up this rude staircase, too rude for such delicate feet. Ah, I beg pardon, I forgot that you had quarrelled. Well, it is only a lover's quarrel, and the reconciliation will be the happier for being delayed so long. Henry is a worthy lad and an excellent marksman."

A heroine in a modern novel would have turned back this raillery with a smart or proud reply, but Emily was of too sincere and ingenuous a nature to answer a jest on a subject in which her heart was so deeply interested. Her cheek burned with a blush of the deepest crimson as she turned away without speaking, and fled up the rocks. But, though she spoke not, a tumult of images and feelings passed rapidly through her mind. One vivid picture of the past after another came before her recollection, and one well-known form and face were present in them all. She saw Henry Danville as when she first beheld him, and was struck with his frank, intelligent aspect and graceful manners—respectful, attentive, eager to attract her notice, and fearing to displease—then again as the accepted and delighted lover—and finally, as he was now, offended, cold, and estranged. A rustic ball rose before her imagination—a young stranger from the Atlantic States appears among the revellers—the phrases of the gay and animated conversation she held with him again vibrate on her ear—and again she sees Henry standing aloof, and looking gloomy and unhappy. She remembered how she had undertaken to discipline him for this unreasonable jealousy by appearing charmed with her new acquaintance, and accepting his



civilities with affected pleasure; how he had taken fire at this, had withdrawn himself from her society, and transferred his attentions to others. It was but the simple history of what is common enough among youthful lovers, but it was not of the less moment to her, whose heart now throbbed with mingled pride and anguish, as these incidents came thronging back upon her memory. She regretted her own folly, but her thoughts severely blamed Henry for making so trifling a matter a ground of serious offence, and she sought consolation in reflecting how unhappy she must have been had she been united for life to one of so jealous a temper. "I am confident," said she to herself, "that his present indifference is all a pretence; he will soon sue for a reconciliation, and I shall then show him that I can be as indifferent as himself."

Occupied with these reflections, Emily, before she was aware, found herself at the summit of that pile of broken rocks, and midway up the precipice.

## II.

The ecclesiastic was the first of the party who arrived at the summit. He had seated himself on one of the blocks of stone which composed the pile, with his back against the wall of the precipice, and had taken the hat from his brow that he might enjoy the breeze which played lightly about the cliffs, and the coolness of which was doubly grateful after the toil of the ascent. In doing this, he uncovered a high and ample forehead, such as artists love to couple with the features of old age when they would represent a countenance at once noble and venerable. This is the only feature of the human face which Time spares: he dims the lustre of the eye; he shrivels the cheek; he destroys the firm or sweet expression of the mouth; he thins and whitens the hairs; but the forehead, that temple of thought, is beyond his reach, or, rather, it shows more grand and lofty for the ravages which surround it.

The spot on which they now stood commanded a view of a wide extent of uncultivated and uninhabited country. An

eminence interposed to hide from sight the village they had left, and on every side were the summits of a boundless forest, here and there diversified with a hollow of softer and richer verdure, where the hurricane, a short time before, had descended to lay prostrate the gigantic trees, and a young growth had shot up in their stead. Solitary savannas opened in the depth of the woods, and far off a lonely stream was flowing away in silence, sometimes among venerable trees, and sometimes through natural meadows, crimson with blossoms. All around them was the might, the majesty of vegetable life, untamed by the hand of man, and pampered by the genial elements into boundless luxuriance. The ecclesiastic pointed out to his companions the peculiarities of the scenery; he expatiated on the flowery beauty of those unshorn lawns, and on the lofty growth and the magnificence and variety of foliage which distinguish the American forest, so much the admiration of those who have seen only the groves of Europe.

The conversation was interrupted by a harsh, stridulous cry, and, looking up, the party beheld the eagle, who had left his perch on the top of the precipice, and, having passed over their heads, was winging his way toward the stream in the distance.

"Ah," exclaimed Le Maire, "that is a hungry note, and the bird is a shrewd one, for he is steering to a place where there is plenty of game to my certain knowledge. It is the golden eagle; the war eagle, as the Indians call him, and no chicken either, as you may understand from the dark color of his plumage. I warrant that he has gorged many a rabbit and prairie-hen on these old cliffs. At all events, he has made me think of my dinner. Unless we make haste, good Father Ambrose, I am positive that we shall be late to our venison and claret."

"We must endeavor to prevent so great a misfortune," said Father Ambrose, rising from the rock where he sat and proceeding on the path toward the cavern. It was a kind of narrow terrace, varying in width from four to ten feet, run-

ning westwardly along the face of the steep, solid rock, and apparently formed by the breaking away of the upper part of one of the perpendicular strata of which the precipice was composed. That event must have happened at a very remote period, for in some places the earth had accumulated on the path to a considerable depth, and here and there grew a hardy and dwarfish shrub, or a tuft of wild flowers hanging over the edge. As they proceeded, the great height at which they stood, and the steepness of the rocky wall above and below them, made Emily often tremble and grow pale as she looked down. A few rods brought the party to a turn in the rock, where the path was narrower than elsewhere, and precisely in the angle a portion of the terrace on which they walked had fallen, leaving a chasm of about two feet in width, through which their distance from the base was fearfully apparent. Le Maire had already passed it, but Emily, when she arrived at the spot, shrunk back and leaned against the rock.

"I fear I shall not be able to cross the chasm," said she, in a tone of alarm. "My poor head grows giddy from a single look at it."

"Le Maire will assist you, my child," said the old man, who walked behind her.

"With the greatest pleasure in life," answered Le Maire; "though I confess I little expected that the daughter of a clear-headed Yankee would complain of being giddy in any situation. But this comes of having a French mother, I suppose. Let me provide a convenient station for Madame Le Maire, as you call her, and I will help you over." He then placed his rifle against the rock, where the path immediately beyond him grew wider, and, advancing to the edge of the chasm, held forth both hands to Emily, taking hold of her arms near the elbow. In doing this he perceived that she trembled.

"You are as safe here as when you were in the woods below," said Le Maire, "if you would but think so. Step forward now, firmly, and look neither to the right nor left."

She took the step, but at that moment the strange inclina-

tion which we sometimes feel when standing on a dizzy height, to cast ourselves to the ground, came powerfully over her, and she leaned involuntarily and heavily toward the verge of the precipice. Le Maire was instantly aware of the movement, and, bracing himself firmly, strove with all his might to counteract it. Had his grasp been less steady, or his self-possession less perfect, they would both inevitably have been precipitated from where they stood; but Le Maire was familiar with all the perilous situations of the wilderness, and the presence of mind he had learned in such a school did not now desert him. His countenance bore witness to the intense exertion he was making; it was flushed, and its muscles were working powerfully; his lips were closely compressed; the veins on his brow swelled, and his arms quivered with the strong tension given to their sinews. For an instant the fate of the two seemed in suspense, but the strength of the hunter prevailed, and he placed the damsel beside him on the rock, fainting, and pallid as a corpse.

"God be praised!" said the priest, drawing heavily the breath which he had involuntarily held during that fearful moment while he had watched the scene, unable to render the least assistance.

### III.

Some moments of repose were necessary before Emily was sufficiently recovered from her agitation to be able to proceed. The tears filled her eyes as she briefly but warmly thanked Le Maire for his generous exertions to save her, and begged his pardon for the foolish and awkward timidity, as she termed it, which had put his life as well as her own in such extreme peril.

"I confess," answered he, good naturedly, "that, had you been of as solid a composition as some ladies with whom I have the honor of an acquaintance, Madame Le Maire here would most certainly have been a widow. I understand my own strength, however," added he, for on this point he was



somewhat vain, "and if I had not, I should still have been willing to risk something rather than lose you. But I will take care, Emily, that you do not lead me into another scrape of the kind. When we return, I shall, by your leave, take you in my arms and carry you over the chasm, and you may shut your eyes while I do it, if you please."

They now again set out, and in a few moments arrived at the mouth of the cavern they had come to visit. A projecting mass of rock impended over it, so low as not to allow in front an entrance to a person standing upright, but on each side it receded upward in such a manner as to leave two high, narrow openings, giving it the appearance of being suspended from the cavern-roof. Beneath it, the floor, which was a continuation of the terrace leading to the spot, was covered in places to a considerable depth with soil formed by the disintegration of the neighboring rocks, and traversed by several fissures nearly filled with earth. As they entered by one of the narrow side-openings, Emily looked up to the crag with a slight shudder.

"If it should fall!" thought she to herself—but a feeling of shame at the idle fear she had lately manifested restrained her from giving utterance to the thought.

The good ecclesiastic perceived what was passing in her mind, and said, with a smile: "There is no danger, my child; that rock has been suspended over the entrance for centuries—for thousands of years, perhaps—and is not likely to fall to-day. Ages must have elapsed before the crags could have crumbled to form the soil now under our feet. It is true that there is no place sacred from the intrusion of accident; everywhere may unforeseen events surprise and crush us, as the foot of man surprises and crushes the insect in his path; but to suppose peculiar danger in a place which has known no change for hundreds of years is to distrust Providence.—Come, *Le Maire*," said Father Ambrose, "will you oblige us by striking a light? Our eyes have been too much in the sunshine to distinguish objects in this dark place."

Le Maire produced from his hunting-bag a roll of tinder, and, lighting it with a spark from his rifle, kindled in a few moments a large pitch-pine torch. The circumstance which first struck the attention of the party was the profound and solemn stillness of the place. The most quiet day has under the open sky its multitude of sounds—the lapse of waters, the subtle motions of the apparently slumbering air among forests, grasses, and rocks, the flight and note of insects, the voices of animals, the rising of exhalations, the mighty process of change, of perpetual growth and decay, going on all over the earth, produce a chorus of noises which the hearing cannot analyze—which, though it may seem to you silence, is not so; and, when from such a scene you pass directly into one of the rocky chambers of the earth, you perceive your error by the contrast. As the three went forward they passed through a heap of dry leaves lightly piled, which the winds of the last autumn had blown into the cave from the summit of the surrounding forest, and the rustling made by their steps sounded strangely loud amid that death-like silence. A spacious cavern presented itself to their sight, the roof of which near the entrance was low, but, several paces beyond, it rose to a great height, where the smoke of the torch, ascending, mingled with the darkness, but the flame did not reveal the face of the vault.

They soon came to where, as Father Ambrose informed them, the cave divided into two branches. “That on the left,” said he, “soon becomes a low and narrow passage among the rocks; this on the right leads to a large chamber, in which lie the bones from which the cavern takes its name.”

He now took the torch from the hand of Le Maire, and, turning to the right, guided his companions to a lofty and wide apartment of the cave, in one corner of which he showed them a human skeleton lying extended on the rocky floor. Some decayed fragments, apparently of the skins of animals, lay under it in places, and one small remnant passed over the thighs, but the bones, though they had acquired from the atmosphere of the cave a greenish-yellow hue, were seemingly un-

mouldered. They still retained their original relative position, and appeared as if never disturbed since the sleep of death came over the frame to which they once belonged. Emily gazed on the spectacle with that natural horror which the remains of the dead inspire. Even Le Maire, with all his vivacity and garrulity, was silent for a moment.

"Is anything known of the manner in which this poor wretch came to his end?" he at length inquired.

"Nothing. The name of Skeleton's Cave was given to this place by the aborigines; but I believe they have no tradition concerning these remains. If you look at the right leg you will perceive that the bone is fractured; it is most likely the man was wounded on these very cliffs, either by accident or by some enemy, and that he crawled to this retreat, where he perished from want of attendance and from famine."

"What a death!" murmured Emily.

The ecclesiastic then directed their attention to another part of the same chamber, where he said it was formerly not uncommon for persons benighted in these parts, particularly hunters, to pass the night. "You perceive," added he, "that this spot is higher than the rest of the cavern, and drier also; indeed, no part of the cavern is much subject to moisture. A bed of leaves on this rock, with a good blanket, is no bad accommodation for a night's rest, as I can assure you, having once made the experiment myself many years since, when I came hither from Europe. Ah! what have we here? Coals, brands, splinters of pitch-pine! The cave must have been occupied lately for the purpose I mentioned, and by people, too, who, I dare say, from the preparations they seem to have made, passed the night very comfortably."

"I dare say they did so, though they had an ugly bedfellow yonder," answered Le Maire; "but I hope you do not think of following their example. As you have shown us, I presume, the principal curiosities of the cave, I take the liberty of suggesting the propriety of getting, as fast as we can, out of this melancholy place, which has already put me out of

spirits. That poor wretch who died of famine !—I shall never get him out of my head till I am fairly set down to dinner. Not that I care more for my dinner than any other man when there is anything of importance in the way—as, for example, a buffalo, or a fat buck, or a bear to be killed—but you will allow, Father Ambrose, that a saddle of venison, or a hump of buffalo, and a sober bottle of claret, are a prettier spectacle, particularly at this time of day, than that mouldy skeleton yonder. I intended to shoot something on my way back, just to keep my hand and eye in practice, but it is quite too late to think of that. Besides, here is Emily, poor thing ! whom we have contrived to get up to this place, and whom we must manage to get down again as well as we can.”

The good priest, though by no means participating in Le Maire’s haste to be gone, mildly yielded to his instances, particularly as they were seconded by Emily, and they accordingly prepared to return. On reaching the mouth of the cave, they were struck with the change in the aspect of the heavens. Dark, heavy clouds, the round summits of which were seen one beyond the other, were rapidly rising in the west ; and, through the grayish-blue haze which suffused the sky before them, the sun appeared already shorn of his beams. A sound was heard afar off of mighty winds contending with the forest, and the thunder rolled at a distance.

“We must stay at least until the storm is over,” said Father Ambrose ; “it would be upon us before we could descend these cliffs. Let us watch it, from where we stand, above the tops of these old woods. I can promise you it will be a magnificent spectacle.”

Emily, though she would gladly have left the cave, could say nothing against the propriety of this advice ; and even Le Maire, notwithstanding that he declared he had rather see a well-loaded table at that moment than all the storms that ever blew, preferred remaining to the manifest inconvenience of attempting a descent. In a few moments the dark array of clouds swept over the face of the sun, and a tumult in



the woods announced the coming of the blast. The summits of the forest waved and stooped before it, like a field of young flax in the summer breeze—another and fiercer gust descended—another and stronger convulsion of the forest ensued. The trees rocked backward and forward, leaned and rose, and tossed and swung their branches in every direction; and the whirling air above them was filled with their leafy spoils. The roar was tremendous—the noise of the ocean in a tempest is not louder—it seemed as if that innumerable multitude of giants of the wood raised a universal voice of wailing under the fury that smote and tortured them. At length the rain began to fall, first in large and rare drops, and then the thunder burst overhead, and the waters of the firmament poured down in torrents, and the blast that howled in the woods fled before them as if from an element that it feared. The trees again stood erect, and nothing was heard but the rain beating heavily on the immense canopy of leaves around, and the occasional crashings of the thunder, accompanied by flashes of lightning, that threw a vivid light upon the walls of the cavern. The priest and his companions stood contemplating this scene in silence, when a rushing of water close at hand was heard. Father Ambrose showed the others where a stream, formed from the rains collected on the highlands above, descended on the crag that overhung the mouth of the cavern, and, shooting clear of the rocks on which they stood, fell in spray to the broken fragments at the base of the precipice.

A gust of wind drove the rain into the opening where they stood, and obliged them to retire farther within. The priest suggested that they should take this opportunity to examine that part of the cave which in going to the skeleton's chamber they had passed on their left, observing, however, that he believed it was no otherwise remarkable than for its narrowness and its length. Le Maire and Emily assented, and, the former taking up the torch which he had stuck in the ground, they went back into the interior. They had just reached the spot

where the two passages diverged from each other when a hideous and intense glare of light filled the cavern, showing for an instant the walls, the roof, the floor, and every crag and recess, with the distinctness of the broadest sunshine. A frightful crash accompanied it, consisting of several sharp and deafening explosions, as if the very heart of the mountain was rent asunder by the lightning, and immediately after a body of immense weight seemed to fall at their very feet with a heavy sound, and a shock that caused the place where they stood to tremble as if shaken by an earthquake. A strong blast of air rushed by them, and a suffocating odor filled the cavern.

Father Ambrose had fallen upon his knees in mental prayer at the explosion; but the blast from the mouth of the cavern threw him to the earth. He raised himself, however, immediately, and found himself in utter silence and darkness, save that a livid image of that insufferable glare floated yet before his eyeballs. He called first upon Emily, who did not answer, then upon Le Maire, who replied from the ground a few paces nearer the entrance of the cave. He also had been thrown prostrate, and the torch he carried was extinguished. It was but the work of an instant to kindle it again, and they then discovered Emily extended near them in a swoon.

"Let us bear her to the mouth of the cavern," said Le Maire; "the fresh air from without will revive her." He took her in his arms, but, on arriving at the spot, he placed her suddenly on the ground, and, raising both hands, exclaimed, with an accent of despair: "The rock is fallen! the entrance is closed!"

It was but too evident—Father Ambrose needed but a single look to convince him of its truth—the huge rock which impended over the entrance had been loosened by the thunderbolt, and had fallen upon the floor of the cave, closing all return to the outer world.

## IV.

Before inquiring further into the extent of the disaster, an office of humanity was to be performed. Emily was yet lying on the floor of the cave in a swoon, and the old man, stooping down and placing her head in his lap, began to use the ordinary means of recovery, and called on Le Maire to assist him. The hunter, after being spoken to several times, started from his gloomy revery, and, kneeling down by the side of the priest, aided him in chafing her temples and hands, and fanned her cheeks with his cap until consciousness was restored, when the priest communicated the terrible intelligence of what had happened.

Presence of mind and fortitude do not always dwell together. Those who are most easily overcome by the appearance of danger often support the calamity after it has fallen with the most composure. Le Maire had presence of mind, but he had not learned to submit with patience to irremediable misfortune; Emily could not command her nerves in sudden peril, but she could suffer with a firmness which left her mind at liberty to employ its resources. The very disaster which had happened seemed to inspire her mind and her frame with new strength. The vague apprehensions which had haunted her were now reduced to certainty; she saw the extent of the calamity and felt the duties it imposed. She rose from the ground without aid and with a composed countenance, and began to confer with Father Ambrose on the probabilities and means of escape from their present situation.

In the mean time, Le Maire, who had left them as soon as Emily came to herself, was eagerly employed in examining the entrance where the rock had fallen. On one side it lay close against the wall of the cavern; on the other was an opening of about a hand's breadth, which appeared, so far as he could distinguish, to communicate with the outer atmosphere. He looked above, but there the low roof, which met

the wavering flame of his torch, showed a collection of large blocks firmly wedged together; he cast his eyes downward, but there the lower edge of the vast mass which had fallen lay embedded in the soil; he placed his shoulder against it and exerted his utmost strength to discover if it were movable, but it yielded no more than the rock on which it rested.

"It is all over with us," said he at length, dashing to the ground the torch, which the priest, approaching, prudently took up before it was extinguished; "it is all over with us, and we must perish in this horrid place like wild beasts in a trap. There is no opening, no possible way of escape, and not a soul on the wide earth knows where we are, or what is our situation." Then, turning fiercely to the priest, and losing his habitual respect for his person and office in the bitterness of his despair, he said: "This is all your doing; it was you who decoyed us hither to lay our bones beside those of that savage yonder."

"My son—" said the old man.

"Call me not son; this is no time for cant. You take my life, and when I reproach you, you give me fine words. You call yourself a man of God—can you pray us out of this horrible dungeon into which you have enticed us to bury us alive?"

"Say not that I take your life," said Father Ambrose, mildly, without otherwise noticing his reproaches; "there is no reason as yet to suppose our case hopeless. Though we informed no person of the place to which we were going, it does not follow that we shall not be missed, or that no inquiry will be made for us. With to-morrow morning the whole settlement will doubtless be out to search for us, and, as it is probable that some of them will pass this way, we may make ourselves heard by them from the mouth of the cavern. Besides, as Emily has just suggested, it is not impossible that the cave may have some other outlet, and that the part we were about to examine may afford a passage to the daylight."

Le Maire caught eagerly at the hope thus presented. "I beg your pardon, Father," said he; "I was hasty—I was furious



—but it is terrible, you will allow, to be shut up in this sepulchre, with the stone rolled to its mouth, and left to die. It is no light trial of patience merely to pass the night here, particularly,” said he, with a smile, “when you know that dinner is waiting for you at home. Well, if the cave is to be explored, let us set about it immediately ; if there is any way of getting out, let us discover it as soon as possible.”

They again went to the passage which diverged from the path leading to the skeleton’s chamber. It was a low, irregular passage, sometimes so narrow that they were obliged to walk one behind the other, and sometimes wide enough to permit them to walk abreast. After proceeding a few rods it became so low that they were obliged to stoop.

“Remain here,” said Le Maire, “and give me the torch. If there be any way of reaching daylight by this part of the cavern, I will give an account of it in due time.”

Father Ambrose and Emily then seated themselves on a low bench of stone in the side of the cavern, while he went forward. The gleam of his torch, appearing and disappearing, showed the windings of the passage he was treading, and sometimes the sound of measured steps on the rock announced that he was walking upright, and sometimes a confused and struggling noise denoted that he was making his way on his elbows and knees. At length the sound was heard no longer, and the gleam of the torch ceased altogether to be descried in the passage.

“Father Ambrose!” said Emily, after a long interval. These words, though in the lowest key of her voice, were uttered in such a tone of awe, and sounded, moreover, with such an unnatural distinctness in the midst of that perfect stillness, that the good Father started.

“What would you, my daughter?”

“This darkness and this silence are frightful, and I spoke that you might reassure me by the sound of your voice. My uncle is long in returning.”

“The passage is a long and intricate one.”

"But is there no danger? I have heard of death-damps in pits and deep caverns, by the mere breathing of which a man dies silently and without a struggle. If my poor uncle should never return!"

"Let us not afflict ourselves with supposable evils while a real calamity is impending over us. The cavern has been explored to a considerable distance without any such consequence as you mention to those who undertook it."

"God grant that he may discover a passage out of the cave! But I am afraid of the effect of a disappointment, he is so impatient—so impetuous."

"God grant us all grace to submit to his good pleasure," rejoined the priest; "but I think I hear him on the return. Listen, my child, you can distinguish sounds inaudible to my dull ears."

Emily listened, but in vain. At length, after another long interval, a sound of steps was heard, seemingly at a vast distance. In a little while a faint light showed itself in the passage, and after some minutes Le Maire appeared, panting with exertion, his face covered with perspiration, and his clothes soiled with the dust and slime of the rocks. He was about to throw himself on the rocky seat beside them without speaking.

"I fear your search has been unsuccessful," said Father Ambrose.

"There is no outlet in that quarter," rejoined Le Maire, sullenly. "I have explored every winding and every cranny of the passage, and have been brought up at last, in every instance, against the solid rock."

"There is no alternative, then," said the ecclesiastic, "but to make ourselves as tranquil and comfortable as we can for the night. It is true, Emily, that one corner of it is occupied by an ill-looking inmate, but I can promise you, from my own experience, that he will do you no harm. So let us adjourn to the skeleton's chamber, and leave to Providence the events of the morrow."

To the skeleton's chamber they went accordingly, taking the precaution to remove thither a quantity of the dry leaves, which lay heaped not far from the mouth of the cave, to form couches for their night's repose. A log of wood, of considerable size, was found in this part of the cavern, apparently left there by those who had lately occupied it for the night; and, on collecting the brands and bits of wood which lay scattered about, they found themselves in possession of a respectable stock of fuel. A fire was kindled, and the warmth, the light, the crackling brands, and the ever-moving flames, with the dancing shadows they threw on the walls, and the waving trains of smoke that mounted like winged serpents to the roof, and glided away to the larger and loftier apartment of the cave, gave to that recess, lately so still, dark, and damp, a kind of wild cheerfulness and animation, which, under other circumstances, could not have failed to raise the spirits of the party. They placed themselves around that rude hearth. Emily taking care to turn her back to the corner where lay the skeleton. Father Ambrose had been educated in Europe; he had seen much of men and manners, and he now exerted himself to entertain his companions by the narrative of what had fallen under his observation in that ancient abode of civilized man. He was successful, and the little circle forgot for a while, in the charm of his conversation, their misfortune and their danger. Even Le Maire was enticed into relating one or two of his exploits, and Emily suffered a few of the arch sallies that distinguished her in more cheerful moments to escape her. At length Le Maire's hunting-watch pointed to the hour of ten, and the good priest counselled them to seek repose. He gave them his blessing, recommending them to the great Preserver of men, and then, laying themselves down on their beds of leaves around the fire, they endeavored to compose themselves to rest.

But, now that each was left to the companionship of his own thoughts, the idea of their situation intruded upon their minds with a sense of pain and anxiety which repulsed the

blessing of sleep. The reflection of each on the events of the day and the prospects of the morrow were different; those of Emily were the most cheerful, as her hopes of deliverance were the most sanguine. Her imagination had formed a picture of the incidents of her rescue from the fate that threatened her—a little romance in anticipation, which she would not for the world have revealed to living ear, but which she dwelt upon fondly and perpetually in the secrecy of her own meditations. She thought what must be the effect of her mysterious absence from the village upon Henry Danville, whose very jealousy, causeless as it was, demonstrated the sincerity and depth of his affection. She represented him to herself as the leader in the search that would be set on foot for the lost ones, as the most adventurous of the band, the most persevering, the most inventive, and the most successful.

“He will pass by this precipice to-morrow,” thought she; “like others, he has heard of this cave; he will see that the fall of the rock has closed the entrance; his quick apprehension will divine the place of our imprisonment; he will call upon those who are engaged in the search; he will climb the precipice; he will deliver us, and I shall forgive him. But should it be my fate to perish, should none ever know the manner and place of my death, there will be one at least who will remember and regret me. He will bitterly repent the wrong he has done me, and the tears will start into his eyes at the mention of my name.” A tear gushed out from between the closed lids of the fair girl as this thought passed through her mind, but it was such a tear as maidens love to shed, and it did not delay the slumber that already began to steal over her.

Sleep was later in visiting the eyes of Le Maire. The impatience which a bold and adventurous man, accustomed to rely on his own activity and address for escape in perilous emergencies, feels under the pressure of a calamity which no exertion of his own can remedy, had chafed and almost maddened his spirit. His heart sank within him at the thought of the lingering death he must die if not liberated from his living



tomb. Long and uneasily he tossed on his bed of leaves ; but he too had his hopes of deliverance by the people of the village, who would unquestionably assemble in the morning to search for their lost neighbors, and who might discover their situation. These thoughts at length prevailed over those of a gloomier kind ; and, the fatigues of the day overcoming his eyes with drowsiness, he fell into a slumber, profound, as it seemed from his hard-drawn breath, but uneasy, and filled with unpleasant dreams, as was evident from frequent starts and muttered exclamations.

When it was certain that both were asleep, Father Ambrose raised himself from his place and regarded them sorrowfully and attentively. He had not slept, though, from his motionless posture and closed eyes, an observer might have thought him buried in a deep slumber. His own apprehensions, notwithstanding that he had endeavored to prevent his companions from yielding themselves up to despair, were more painful than he had permitted himself to utter. That there was a possibility of their deliverance was true, but it was hardly to be expected that those who sought for them would think of looking for them in a cavern, nor was it likely that any cry they could utter would be heard below. The old man's thoughts gradually formed themselves into a kind of soliloquy, uttered, as is often the case with men much given to solitary meditation and prayer, in a low but articulate voice. "For myself," said he, "my life is near its close, and the day of decrepitude may be even yet nearer than the day of death. I repine not, if it be the will of God, that my existence on earth, already mercifully protracted to the ordinary limits of usefulness, should end here. But my heart bleeds to think that this maiden, in the blossom of her beauty and in the spring-time of her hopes, and that he who slumbers near me, in the pride and strength of manhood, should be thus violently divorced from a life which nature perhaps intended for as long a date as mine. I little thought, when the mother of that fair young creature in dying committed her to my charge, that I should

be her guide to a place where she should meet with a frightful and unnatural death. Accustomed as I am to protracted fastings, it is not impossible that I may outlive them both, and, after having closed their eyes, who should have closed mine, I may be delivered, and go forth in my uselessness from the sepulchre of those who should have been the delight and support of their friends. Let it not displease Thee, O my Maker ! if, like the patriarch of old, I venture to expostulate with Thee." And the old man placed himself in an attitude of supplication, clasping his hands and raising them toward heaven. Long did he remain in that posture, motionless; and, at length lowering his hands, he cast a look upon the sleepers near him, and, laying himself down upon his bed of leaves, was soon asleep also.

## V.

Of course, the slumbers of none of the party were long protracted. They were early dispersed by the idea of their imprisonment in that mountain dungeon, which now and then showed itself painfully in the imagery of their dreams. When Emily awoke, she found herself alone in the skeleton's chamber. Her eyes, accustomed to the darkness, could now distinguish most of the objects around her by the help of a gleam of light, which appeared to come in from the larger apartment. The fire, kindled the night previous, was now a mass of ashes and blackened brands; and the couches of her two companions yet showed the pressure of their forms. She arose, and, not without casting a look at the grim inmate of the place, whose discolored bones were just distinguishable in that dim twilight, passed into the outer chamber. Here she found the priest and Le Maire standing near the mouth of the cavern, where a strong light, at least so it seemed to her eyes, streamed in through the opening between the wall and the fallen rock, showing that the short night of summer was already past.

"We are watching the increasing light of the morning," said the priest.

“And waiting for the friends whom it will bring to deliver us,” added Le Maire.

“You will admit me to share in the occupation, I hope,” answered Emily. “I am fit for nothing else, as you know, but to watch and wait, and I will endeavor to do that patiently.”

It was not long before a brighter and a steady light through the aperture informed the prisoners that the sun had risen over the forest-tops, and that the perfect day now shone upon the earth. To those who could look upon the woods and savannas, the hills and the waters around, that morning was one of the most beautiful of the beautiful season to which it belonged. The aspect of nature, like one of those human countenances we sometimes meet with, so radiant with cheerfulness that it seems as if they had never known the expression of sorrow, showed, in the gladness it now put on, no traces of the tempest of the preceding day. The intensity of the sun's light was tempered by the white clouds that now and then floated over it, trailing through a soft blue sky; and the light and fresh breezes seemed to hover in the air, to rise and descend with a motion like the irregular and capricious course of the butterfly; now stooping to wrinkle the surface of the stream, now rising to murmur in the leaves of the forest, and again descending to shake the dew from the cups of the opening flowers in the natural meadows. The replenished brooks had a livelier warble, and the notes of innumerable birds rang more cheerfully through the clear atmosphere. The prisoners of the cavern, however, could only distinguish the beauty of the morning by slight tokens—now and then a sweep of the winds over the forest-tops; sometimes the note of the wood-thrush or of the cardinal bird as he flew by the face of the rocks; and occasionally a breath of the perfumed atmosphere flowing through the aperture. These intimations of liberty and enjoyment from the world without only heightened their impatience at the imprisonment to which they were doomed.

"Listen!" said Emily; "I think I hear a human voice."

"There is certainly a distant call in the woods," said Le Maire, after a moment's silence. "Let us all shout together for assistance."

They shouted accordingly, Le Maire exerting his clear and powerful voice to the utmost, and the others aiding him, as well as they were able, with their feebler and less practiced organs. A shrill, discordant cry replied, apparently from the cliffs close to the cave.

"A parroquet!" exclaimed Le Maire. "The noisy pest! I wish the painted rascal were within reach of my rifle. You see, Father Ambrose, we are forgotten by mankind; and the very birds of the wilderness mock our cries for assistance."

"You have a quick fancy, my son," answered the priest; "but it is yet quite too soon to give over. It is now the very hour when we may expect our neighbors to be looking for us in these parts."

They continued, therefore, to remain by the opening, and, from time to time, to raise that shout for assistance. Hour after hour passed, and no answer was returned to their cries, which, indeed, could have been but feebly heard, if heard at all, at the foot of the precipice; hour after hour passed, and no foot climbed the rocky stair that led to their prison. The pangs of hunger in the mean time began to assail them, and, more intolerable than these, a feverish and tormenting thirst.

"You have practiced fasting," said Le Maire to Father Ambrose; "and so have I when I could get nothing to eat. In my hunting excursions I have sometimes gone without tasting food from morning till the night of the next day. I found relief from an expedient which I learned from the old hunters, but which I presume you churchmen are not acquainted with. Here it is."

Saying this, he passed the sash he wore once more round his body, drawing it tightly, and securing it by a firm knot. Father Ambrose declined adopting, for the present, a similar expedient, alleging that as yet he had suffered little inconveni-



ence from want of food, except a considerable degree of thirst ; but Emily, already weak from fasting, allowed her slender waist to be wrapped tightly in the folds of a silk shawl which she had brought with her. The importunities of hunger were thus rendered less painful, and a new tension was given to the enervated frame ; but the burning thirst was not at all allayed. The cave was then explored for water ; every corner was examined, and holes were dug in the soil, which in some places covered the rocky floor, but in vain. Le Maire again ventured into the long, narrow passage which he had followed to its termination the day previous, in the hope of now discovering some concealed spring, or some place where the much desired element fell in drops from the roof, but he returned fatigued and unsuccessful. As he came forth into the larger apartment, a light fluttering sound, as of the waving of a thin garment, attracted the attention of the party. On listening attentively, it appeared to be within the cavern ; but what most excited their surprise was that it passed suddenly and mysteriously from place to place, while the agent continued invisible in spite of all their endeavors to discover it. Sometimes it was heard on the one side, sometimes on the other, now from the roof, and now from the floor, near, and at a distance. At length it passed directly over their heads.

"It is precisely the sound of a light robe agitated by the wind, or by a swift motion of the person wearing it," said Emily.

"It is no sound of this earth, I will depose in a court of justice," said Le Maire, who was naturally of a superstitious turn, "or we should see the thing that makes it."

"All we can say at present," answered the priest, "is that we cannot discover the cause ; but it does not therefore follow that it is anything supernatural. What is perceived by one of our senses only does not necessarily belong to the other world. I have no doubt, however, that we shall discover the cause before we leave the cavern."

"Nor I either," rejoined Le Maire, with a look and tone

which showed the awe that had mastered him ; " I am satisfied of the cause already. It is a warning of approaching death. We must perish in this cavern."

Emily, much as she was accustomed to rely on the opinions of the priest, felt, in spite of herself, the infection of that feeling of superstitious terror which had seized upon her uncle, and her heart had begun to beat thick, when a weak chirp was heard.

" The mystery is solved," exclaimed Father Ambrose, " and your ghost, my good friend, is only a harmless fellow-prisoner, a poor bird, which the storm doubtless drove into the cave, and which has been confined here ever since." As he spoke, Emily, who had looked to the quarter whence the sound proceeded, pointed out the bird sitting on a projection of rock at no great distance:

" A godsend !" cried Le Maire ; " the bird is ours, though his little carcass will hardly furnish a mouthful for each of us." Saying this, he took up his rifle, which stood leaning against the wall of the cavern, and raised the piece to his eye. Another instant and the bird would have fallen, but Emily laid her hand on his arm.

" Cannot we take him alive," asked she, " and make him the agent of our deliverance?"

" How will you do that?" said Le Maire, without lowering his rifle.

" Send him out at the opening yonder, with a letter tied to his wing, to inform our friends of our situation. It will at least increase the chances of our escape."

" It is well thought of," answered Le Maire ; " and now, Emily, you shall see how an experienced hunter takes a bird without harming a single feather of his wings."

Saying this he went to the mouth of the cave and began to turn up, with a splinter of wood, the fresh earth. After considerable examination, he drew forth a beetle, and, producing from his hunting-bag a quantity of pack-thread, he tied the insect to one end of it, and, having placed it on the point of a crag, retired to a little distance with the other end of the

pack-thread in his hand. By frequently changing his place, he caused the bird to approach the spot where he had laid the insect. It was a tedious process ; but, when at length the bird perceived his prey, he flew to it and snapped it up in an instant with the eagerness of famine. By a similar piece of management he contrived to get the thread wound several times about one of the legs of the little creature ; and, when this was effected, he suddenly drew it in, bringing him, fluttering and struggling, to his hand. It proved to be of the species commonly called the cedar-bird.

“ Ah, Father Ambrose,” cried Le Maire, whose vivacity returned with whatever revived his hopes, “ we have caught you a brother ecclesiastic, a *récollet*, as we call him, from the gay hood he wears. No wonder we did not see him before, for his plumage is exactly of the color of the rocks. But he is the very bird for a letter ; look at the sealing-wax he carries on his wings.” As he spoke he displayed the glossy brown pinions, the larger feathers of which were ornamented at their tops with little appendages of a vermilion color, like drops of delicate red sealing-wax.

“ And now let us think,” continued he, “ of writing the letter which this dapper little monk is to carry for us.” A piece of charcoal was brought from the skeleton’s chamber, and, Le Maire having produced some paper from his hunting-bag, the priest wrote upon it a few lines, giving a brief account of their situation. The letter, being folded, and properly addressed, was next perforated with holes, through which a string was inserted, and tied under the wing of the bird. Emily then carried him to the opening, through which he darted forth in apparent joy at regaining his liberty. “ Would that we could pass out,” said she, with a sigh, “ as easily as the little creature which we have just set free. But the *récollet* is a lover of gardens, and he will soon be found seeking his food in those of the village.”

The hopes to which this little expedient gave birth in the bosoms of all contributed somewhat to cheer the gloom of

their confinement. But night came at length to close that long and weary day—a night still more long and weary. The light which came in at the aperture began to wane, and Emily watched it, as it faded, with a sickening of the heart which grew almost to agony when finally it ceased to shine altogether. She had continued during the day to cherish the dream of deliverance by the sagacity and exertions of her lover, and had scarcely allowed herself to contemplate the possibility of remaining in the cavern another night. It was, therefore, in unspeakable bitterness of spirit that she accompanied the priest and Le Maire to the skeleton's chamber, where they collected the brands which remained of the fire of the preceding night, and kindled them into a dull and meagre flame. That evening was a silent one. The day had been passed in various speculations on the probability of their release, in searching the cave for water, and in shouting at the entrance for assistance. But the hour of darkness—the hour which carried their neighbors of the village to their quiet and easy beds in their homes, overflowing with abundance, filled with the sweet air of heaven, and watched by its kindly constellations—that hour brought to the unhappy prisoners of the rock a peculiar sense of desolation and fear, for it was a token that they were, for the time at least, forgotten; that those whom they knew and loved slumbered and thought not of them. They laid themselves down upon their beds of leaves, but the horrible thirst, which consumed them like an inward fire, grew fiercer with the endeavor to court repose, and the blood that crept slowly through their veins seemed to have become a current of liquid flame.

Sleep came not to their eyes, or came attended with dreams of running waters, which they were not permitted to taste; of tempests and earthquakes, and breathless confinement among the clods of earth, and various shapes of strange peril; while their friends seemed to stand aloof, and to look coldly and unconcernedly on, without showing even a desire to render them assistance.



## VI.

On the third day the cavern presented a more gloomy spectacle than it had done at any time since the fall of the rock took place. It was now about eleven o'clock in the morning, and the shrill singing of the wind about the cliffs and through the crevice, which now admitted a dimmer light than on the day previous, announced the approach of a storm from the south. The hope of relief from without was growing fainter and fainter as the time passed on; and the sufferings of the prisoners became more poignant. The approach of the storm, too, could only be regarded as an additional misfortune, since it would probably prevent or obstruct any search which their friends might make for them. They were all three in the outer and larger apartment of the cave. Emily was at a considerable distance from the entrance, reclining on a kind of seat formed of large, loose stones, and overspread with a covering of withered leaves. There was enough of light to show that she was exceedingly pale; that her eyes were closed, and that the breath came thick and pantingly through her parted lips, which alone of all her features retained the color of life. Faint with watching, with want of sustenance, and with anxiety, she had lain herself down on this rude couch, which the care of her companions had provided for her, and had sunk into a temporary slumber. The priest stood close to the mouth of the cave, leaning against the wall, with his arms folded, himself scarcely changed in appearance, except that his cheek seemed somewhat more emaciated, and his eyes were lighted up with a kind of solemn and preternatural brightness. Le Maire, with a spot of fiery red on each cheek, his hair starting wildly in every direction, and his eyes bloodshot, was pacing the cavern floor to and fro, carrying his rifle, occasionally stopping to examine the priming, or to peck the flint; and sometimes standing still for a moment, as if lost in thought. At length he approached the priest, and said to him, in a hollow voice:

"Have you never heard of seamen on a wreck, destitute of provisions, casting lots to see which of their number should die, that the rest might live?"

"I have so."

"Were they right in so doing?"

"I cannot say that they were not. It is a horrid alternative in which they were placed. It might be lawful—it might be expedient—that one should perish for the salvation of the rest."

"Have you never seen an insect or an animal writhing with torture, and have you not shortened its sufferings by putting an end to its life?"

"I have—but what mean these questions?"

"I will tell you. Here is my rifle." As he spoke, Le Maire placed the piece in the hands of Father Ambrose, who took it mechanically. "I ask you to do for me what you would do for the meanest worm. You understand me?"

"Are you mad?" demanded the priest, regarding him with a look in which the expression of unaffected astonishment was mingled with that of solemn reproof.

"Mad! indeed, I am mad if you will have it so; you will feel less scruple at putting an end to the existence of a madman. I cannot linger in this horrid place, neglected and forgotten by those who should have come to deliver me, suffering the slow approaches of death—the pain—the fire in the veins—and, worst of all, this fire in the brain," said Le Maire, striking his forehead. "They think—if they think of me at all—that I am dying of slow tortures; I will disappoint them. Listen, Father," continued he; "would it not be better for you and Emily that I were dead?—is there no way?—look at my veins, they are full yet; and the muscles have not shrunk away from my limbs. Would you not both live the longer if I were to die?"

The priest recoiled at the horrid idea presented to his mind. "We are not cannibals," said he, "thanks be to Divine Providence." An instant's reflection, however, convinced

Father Ambrose that the style of rebuke which he had adopted was not proper for the occasion. The unwonted fierceness and wildness of Le Maire's manner and the strange proposal he had made denoted that alienation of mind which is no uncommon effect of long abstinence from food. He thought it better, therefore, to attempt, by mild and soothing language, to divert him from his horrid design.

"My good friend," said he, "you forget what grounds of hope yet remain to us; indeed, the probability of our escape is scarcely less to-day than it was yesterday. The letter sent out of the cave may be found, and, if so, it will most certainly effect our deliverance; or the fall of the rock may be discovered by some one passing this way, and he may understand that it is possible we are confined here. While our existence is prolonged, there is no occasion for despair. You should endeavor, my son, to compose yourself, and to rely on the goodness of that Power who has never forsaken you."

"Compose myself!" answered Le Maire, who had listened impatiently to this exhortation; "compose myself! Do you not know that there are those here who will not suffer me to be tranquil for a moment? Last night I was twice awakened, just as I had fallen asleep, by a voice pronouncing my name as audibly as I heard your own just now; and the second time I looked to where the skeleton lies, and the foul thing had half raised itself from the rock, and was beckoning me to come and place myself by its side. Can you wonder if I slept no more after that?"

"My son, these are but the dreams of a fever."

"And then, whenever I go by myself I hear low voices and titterings of laughter from the recesses of the rocks. They mock me, that I, a free hunter, a denizen of the woods and prairies, a man whose liberty was never restrained for a moment, should be entrapped in this manner, and made to die like a buffalo in a pit, or like a criminal in the dungeons of the old world—that I should consume with thirst in a land bright with innumerable rivers and springs—that I should wither

away with famine while the woods are full of game, and the prairies covered with buffaloes. I could face famine if I had my liberty. I could meet death without shrinking in the sight of the sun and the earth, and in the fresh open air. I should strive to reach some habitation of my fellow-creatures; I should be sustained by hope; I should travel on till I sank down with weakness and fatigue, and died on the spot. But famine made more frightful by imprisonment and inactivity, and these dreams, as you call them, that dog me, asleep or awake, they are more than I can bear— Hark!" he exclaimed, after a short pause, and throwing quick and wild glances around him; "do you hear them yonder?—do you hear how they mock me?—you will not, then, do what I ask?—give me the rifle!"

"No," said the priest, who instantly comprehended his purpose; "I must keep the piece till you are more composed."

Le Maire seemed not to hear the answer, but, laying his grasp on the rifle, was about to pluck it from the old man's hands. Father Ambrose saw that the attempt to retain possession of it against his superior strength would be vain; he therefore slipped down his right hand to the lock, and, cocking it, touched the trigger, and discharged it in an instant. The report awoke Emily, who came, trembling and breathless, to the spot.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"There is no harm done, my child," answered the priest, assuming an aspect of the most perfect composure. "I discharged the rifle, but it was not aimed at anything, and I beg pardon for interrupting your repose at a time when you so much need it. Suffer me to conduct you back to the place you have left. Le Maire, will you assist?"

Supported by Le Maire on one side and by the priest on the other, Emily, scarcely able to walk from weakness, was led back to her place of repose. Returning with Le Maire, Father Ambrose entreated him to consider how much his niece stood in need of his assistance and protection. He bade him



recollect that his mad haste to quit the world before called by his Maker would leave her, should she ever be released from the cavern, alone and defenceless, or at least with only an old man for her friend, who was himself hourly expecting the summons of death. He exhorted him to reflect how much, even now, in her present condition of weakness and peril, she stood in need of his aid, and conjured him not to be guilty of a pusillanimous and cowardly desertion of one so lovely, so innocent, and so dependent upon him.

Le Maire felt the force of this appeal. A look of human pity passed across the wild expression of his countenance. He put the rifle into the hands of Father Ambrose. "You are right," said he; "I am a fool, and I have been, I suspect, very near becoming a madman. You will keep this until you are entirely willing to trust me with it. I will endeavor to combat these fancies a little longer."

## VII.

In the mean time the light from the aperture grew dimmer and dimmer, and the eyes of the prisoners, though accustomed to the twilight of the cavern, became at length unable to distinguish objects at a few paces from the entrance. The priest and Le Maire had placed themselves by the couch of Emily, but rather, as it seemed, from that instinct of our race which leads us to seek each other's presence, than for any purpose of conversation, for each of the party preserved a gloomy silence. The topics of speculation on their condition had been discussed to weariness, and no others had now any interest for their minds. It was no unwelcome interruption to that melancholy silence when they heard the sound of a mighty rain pouring down upon the leafy summits of the woods, and beating against the naked walls and shelves of the precipice. The roar grew more and more distinct, and at length it seemed that they could distinguish a sort of shuddering of the earth above them, as if a mighty host was marching heavily over it.

The sense of suffering was for a moment suspended in a feeling of awe and curiosity.

"That, likewise, is the rain," said Father Ambrose, after listening for a moment. "The clouds must pour down a perfect cataract when the weight of its fall is thus felt in the heart of the rock."

"Do you hear that noise of running water?" asked Emily, whose quick ear had distinguished the rush of the stream formed by the collected rains over the rocks without at the mouth of the cave.

"Would that its channel were through this cavern!" exclaimed Le Maire, starting up. "Ah! here we have it—we have it. Listen to the dropping of water from the roof near the entrance; and here at the aperture!" He sprang thither in an instant. A little stream, detached from the main current, which descended over rocks that closed the mouth of the cave, fell in a thread of silver amid the faint light that streamed through the opening; he knelt for a moment, received it between his burning lips, and then, hastily returning, bore Emily to the spot. She held out her hollowed palm—white, thin, and semi-transparent, like a pearly shell used for dipping up the waters from one of those sweet fountains that rise by the very edge of the sea—and, as fast as it filled with the cool, bright element, imbibed it with an eagerness and delight inexpressible. The priest followed her example; Le Maire also drank from the little stream as it fell, bathed in it his feverish brow, and suffered it to fall upon his sinewy neck.

"It has given me a new hold on life," said Le Maire, his chest distending with several full and long breathings. "It has not only quenched that hellish thirst, but it has made my head less light, and my heart lighter. I will never speak ill of this element again; the choicest grapes of France never distilled anything so delicious, so grateful, so life-giving. Take notice, Father Ambrose, I retract all I have ever said against water and water-drinkers. I am a sincere penitent, and shall demand absolution."

Father Ambrose had begun gently to reprove Le Maire for his unseasonable levity when Emily cried out, "The rock moves! the rock moves! Come back—come farther into the cavern!" Looking up to the vast mass that closed the entrance, he saw plainly that it was in motion, and he had just time to draw Le Maire from the spot where he had stooped down to take another draught of the stream when a large block, which had been wedged in overhead, gave way, and fell in the very place where he left the prints of his feet. Had he remained there another instant, it must have crushed him to atoms. The prisoners, retreating within the cavern far enough to avoid the danger, but not too far for observation, stood watching the event with mingled apprehension and hope. The floor of the cave just at the edge, on which rested the fallen rock, yawned at the fissures, where the earth with which they were filled had become saturated and swollen with water, and, unable any longer to support the immense weight, settled away, at first slowly under it, and finally, along with its incumbent load, fell suddenly and with a tremendous crash to the base of the precipice, letting the light of day and the air of heaven into the cavern. The thunder of that disruption was succeeded by the fall of a few large fragments of rock on the right and left, after which the priest and his companions heard only the fall of the rain and the heavy sighing of the wind in the forest.

Father Ambrose and Emily knelt involuntarily in thanksgiving at their unexpected deliverance. Le Maire, although unused to the devotional mood, observed their attitude, and bent his knee to imitate it, when a glance at the outer world, now laid open to his sight, made him start again to his feet, with an exclamation of delight. The other two arose also, and turned to the broad opening which now looked out from the cave over the forest. On one side of this opening rushed the torrent whose friendly waters had undermined the rock at the entrance, and now dashed themselves against its shivered fragments below. It is not for me to attempt to describe

how beautiful appeared to their eyes that world which they feared never again to see, or how grateful to their senses was that fresh and fragrant air of the forests which they thought never to breathe again. The light, although the sky was thick with clouds and rain, was almost too intense for their vision, and they shaded their brows with their hands as they looked forth upon that scene of woods and meadows and waters, fairer to their view than it had ever appeared in the most glorious sunshine.

"That world is ours again," said Le Maire, with a tone of exultation. "We are released at last, and now let us see in what manner we can descend."

As he spoke, he approached the verge of the rock from which the severed mass had lately fallen, and saw, to his dismay, that the terrace which had served as a path to the cavern was carried away for a considerable distance to the right and left of where they stood, leaving the face of the precipice smooth and sheer from top to bottom. No footing appeared, no projection by which the boldest and the most agile could scale or descend it. Le Maire threw himself sullenly on the ground. "We must pass another night in this dungeon," said he, "and, perhaps, starve to death after all. It is clear enough that we shall have to remain here until somebody comes to take us down, and the devil himself would not be caught abroad in the woods in the midst of such a storm as this."

The priest and Emily came up at this moment. "This is a sad disappointment," said the former, "but we have this advantage, that we can now make ourselves both seen and heard. Let us try the effect of our voices. It is not impossible that there may be some person within hearing." Accordingly, they shouted together, and though nothing answered but the echo of the forest, yet there was even in that reply of the inanimate creation something cheering and hope-inspiring to those who for nearly three days had perceived that all their cries for succor were smothered in the depths of the earth. Again they raised their voices, and listened for an answering



shout; a third time, and they were answered. The halloo of a full-toned, manly voice arose from the woods below.

"Thank heaven! we are heard at last," said Emily.

"Let us see if the cry was in answer to ours," said the priest; and again they called, and again a shout was returned from the woods. "We are heard—this is certain," continued he, "and the voice is nearer than at first; we shall be released."

At length the sound of quick footsteps on the crackling boughs was heard in the forest, and a young man, of graceful proportions, dressed, like Le Maire, in a hunting-cap and frock, emerged into the space at the foot of the precipice. As he saw the party standing in the cavity of the rock, he clapped his hands with an exclamation of surprise and delight. "Thank heaven! they are there. Are you all safe—all well?"

"All safe," answered Le Maire, "but hungry as wolves, and in a confounded hurry to get out of this horrid den."

The young man regarded the precipice attentively for a moment, and then called out, "Have patience a moment, and I will bring you the means of deliverance." He then disappeared in the forest. Emily's waking dream was, in fact, not wholly unfulfilled. That young man was Henry Danville; she knew him by his air and figure as soon as he emerged from the forest, and before she heard his voice. He had been engaged, with others belonging to the settlement, in pursuit of their lost curate and his companions from the morning after their absence, and fortunately happened to be at no great distance when the disruption of the rock took place. Struck with astonishment at the tremendous concussion, he was hastening to discover the cause, when he heard the shout to which he answered.

It was not long before voices and steps were again heard in the wood, and a crowd of the good villagers (apprised by the paper attached to the little bird, which had been taken in the garden of one of them) soon appeared advancing through the trees, one bearing a basket of provisions, some dragging

ladders, some carrying ropes and other appliances for getting down their friends from their perilous elevation. Several of the ladders being spliced together, and secured by strong cords, were made to reach from the broken rocks below to the mouth of the cavern, and Henry ascended. My readers will have no difficulty in imagining the conclusion. The emotions of the lovers at meeting under such circumstances are, of course, not to be described, and the dialogue that took place on that occasion would not, I fear, bear to be repeated. The joy expressed by the villagers at recovering their worthy pastor brought tears into the good man's eyes; and words are inadequate to do justice to the delight of Le Maire at seeing his old companions and their basket of provisions. My readers may also, if they please, imagine another little incident, without which some of them might think the narrative imperfect, namely, a certain marriage ceremony, which actually took place before the next Christmas, and at which the venerable Father Ambrose officiated. Le Maire, when I last saw him, was living with one of Emily's children, a hale old man of eighty, with a few gray hairs scattered among his raven locks, full of stories of his youthful adventures, among which he reckoned that of his imprisonment in the cave as decidedly the best. He had, however, no disposition to become the hero of another tale of the kind, since he never ventured into another cave, or under another rock, as long as he lived; and was wont to accompany his narrative with a friendly admonition to his youthful and inexperienced hearers against thoughtlessly indulging in so dangerous a practice.

## A STORY OF THE ISLAND OF CUBA.\*

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NUMEROUS as are the strangers who resort to the island of Cuba from the continent of Europe and the States of North America, few, if any, visit it from mere curiosity. The greater part are drawn thither by commerce, a few are in pursuit of health, and fugitives from the severity of our northern winters; but all have almost invariably made their abode in the city of Havana, a place full of strangers and adventurers like themselves, and copying, so far as the climate will permit, the manners of the large European towns. Multitudes of these occasional residents never learn the language with sufficient perfection to speak it, or understand it when spoken, and thus are cut off from the best opportunity of becoming acquainted with the character of the native inhabitants. Thus it is that, notwithstanding the principal city of Cuba is the great mart for the trade of Spanish America, and enjoys so large a portion of the commerce of the world, so little is yet known of the largest, finest, and most fertile of the West India Islands. All the knowledge of it exists in the minds of men too busy to write books, or incompetent to literary pursuits. Geographers are at fault in searching for materials from which to compile a tolerable account of the island; and the celebrated

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\* From the "Talisman," 1830. When he first came to New York, Mr. Bryant resided with a Spanish family, which entertained many ladies and gentlemen from Cuba, and he probably derived the incidents of this narrative from one of them.—ED.

Malte Brun, of whose work his countrymen are so proud, could do nothing better for Cuba than to give a naked translation of what was penned long ago by the old Spanish geographer Alcedo.

I also have visited Cuba, and, like others, visited it in the capacity of a man of business. I went there some fifteen years since to recover a debt due to the estate of a relation of mine, a West Indian merchant, whose executor I had been appointed. Law has its delays in Cuba as well as in other countries; and, being obliged to resort to legal proceedings against the debtor, I was detained longer in the island than is usual with my countrymen. I arrived there in January, and passed the remainder of the winter—if so severe a name can be given to so delightful a season—pleasantly enough among its inhabitants. The acquaintances I formed in the transaction of my business introduced me into society. I found it indeed “a web of mingled yarn,” full of strong contrasts: the gentle and timid; the bold, enterprising, and unprincipled; the kind and the churlish; the acutely sensitive and shamelessly callous; disinterested honor and unblushing fraud, side by side. It was just such a state of society as our own might be were public opinion deprived of more than half its force, and the opportunities of evading the laws and corrupting those who administer them a hundred-fold what they are now. Let me, however, do the Habaneros justice. Of all the citizens of Spanish America, I believe them to possess the best character. They come of a good stock—the virtuous, industrious, and poor inhabitants of Teneriffe and other Canaries, whom the occasional famines which afflict the islands named the Fortunate, after having driven them from Fuerteventura to the Grand Canary, from the Grand Canary to Teneriffe, and from Teneriffe to Palma, oblige to leave their native isles altogether, and would cause to emigrate in still greater numbers but for the severe laws which restrain their departure. In the city of Havana the rude and primitive virtues of this race are somewhat tempered by the softer and more voluptuous



genius of Andalusia; but it is owing, I believe, to their extraction that so much unaffected goodness and simplicity of heart is to be found among the women. I saw them at their balls and *tertulias*, in their splendid Parisian dresses; I saw them in their domestic circles, in the plain but rich costume of Spain. And everywhere I found them kind, affectionate, and simple-hearted; charming in spite of the duskiness of their complexions, with the brightest and blackest eyes in the world, and forms that seemed the more graceful and bewitching from their Asiatic fulness. I talked to them in bad Spanish, and to their tuition I believe is owing the fondness I bear to their language. The people of Havana have taken some liberties with the Castilian tongue and dialect of the stately Dons. Transplanted to the delicious climate of Cuba, it has acquired an Ionic softness and volume to which it is a stranger in its original country. They have mellowed the general pronunciation, depriving it of all its harshness; and, by employing on all occasions its polysyllabic superlatives, and the numerous musical diminutives with which it abounds, have added to its grace what they have taken from its energy.

The warm season was advancing, and I grew uneasy at the idea of remaining in Havana, notwithstanding the hospitality with which I was treated. The odors arising from the stables in the lower stories of all the dwellings of this closely built city overpowered me, and I was wasted and debilitated by the continual heat and perspiration. I grew weary of being obliged to change my linen four or five times a day; and, what was worse, I became afraid of the yellow fever, the black vomit, and the liver complaint. I was haunted by a continual fear that I should *coger un aire*, by which phrase the people mean the contracting of half a dozen strange disorders peculiar to the hotter parts of the West Indies. I therefore resolved to take advantage of the more salubrious situations which the island offered me, and accepted the invitation of a friend to pass the summer months at his coffee plantations. The island of Cuba possesses almost every variety of tem-

perature. Havana, on the sea-shore, lies beneath a burning sun; but you may choose your climate on the sides of that long ridge of mountains which, running the whole length of the island, lifts you at every step into a purer and cooler atmosphere. My friend had his coffee plantation in an elevated part of the island, but still within a genial though not a torrid climate. It were a vain task for me to attempt to describe these beautiful plantations in Cuba to one who has seen nothing like them. The shrubs that produce the aromatic kernel which supplies a refreshing beverage to the whole civilized world are not trusted to the fierce sun and rude dalliance of the air. Vast groves of the most majestic trees of the island are planted to shade them from the heat and shelter them from the winds. The shrubs are disposed in squares, and the avenues between are lined with palm-trees, with mangoes, with the plantain, the banana, and the bamboo. Amid them rises here and there the gigantic cotton-tree, its vast trunk swelling out in the midst like an Egyptian column, and its huge arms stretched forth in the air high above the tops of its brethren—so high that the song of the mock-bird among them is scarcely heard on the ground below. Every kind of foliage, from the slenderest and lightest to the heaviest and most massive, from the palest to that of the most intense verdure, is mingled in these delightful bowers, which murmur with the continual agitation of the soft winds, blowing by day from the sea and by night from the mountains. The orange here hangs out its fragrant blossoms and no less fragrant fruit together; roses of Jericho, that blossom all the year, and ranks of pineapples border the intersecting alleys. The cooing of doves is blended almost continually with the soft rustling of the innumerable branches, and over all is heard at intervals the wild shriek of the catona or the guacamaya. In the midst of this beautiful garden—for such it truly is—often several miles in extent, is the residence of the proprietor and that of his slaves, surrounded by a circle of lime-trees closely planted, intermingled along its edge with flowers of the scarlet cor-

dium and the oleander, and divided by broad openings looking along the principal avenues.

My friend's plantation was situated several miles from Havana, on a tract of ground which inclined with an easy declivity toward the north shore, and was varied with gentle undulations. In the midst wound a little brook, that fell into the *Rio de Puentes Grandes*, and which was further increased by one or two springs breaking out at the foot of the hillocks. As you stood in the great northern avenue in front, you looked down upon the calm ocean which bathes the walls of Havana, the city itself unseen; and, turning to the south, your sight was met among the very tree-tops by the blue summits of San Salvador, a part of that mighty ridge which divides the island longitudinally, clothed to its loftiest peaks with forest of eternal verdure. How often, while I was swallowing the coffee which a domestic brought me at six in the morning, have I gazed through the windows of my bedchamber at those woody heights, red with the early sun, and thought of the majestic highlands of my native river! Let me not, however, forget to do justice to my friend's coffee, which was of the finest, raised on his own plantation, and of the quality of which he was justly proud. The seed from which the shrub was raised he had procured from the little Danish island of St. John's, where the best coffee in the world is produced — a fact known to epicures, and to which I can testify from my own experience, having often drank it at the house of a very knowing, agreeable man, with whom I became acquainted in his official capacity, Counsellor Benzon, Governor of the Island of Santa Cruz.

I passed many agreeable days with my friend in this pleasant retreat, idly enough, but not without learning many things worthy of remembrance. My host was a native of Teneriffe; a dark-complexioned, stern-countenanced, deep-voiced man, with the tall stature and powerful frame of his countrymen. His negroes held him in great awe, for he was one of those men who are obeyed by inferior minds, not from compulsion

nor from affection, but from a sort of instinct and the mere force of a determined manner. A look, a motion of his hand, an indirect intimation of his will, was with them equivalent to a command, and was interpreted with a quickness and obeyed with an alacrity that surprised me. Yet he was substantially kind to them, and, I believe, not a single instance of corporal punishment occurred on the plantation while I remained there.

I had frequent conversations with him on the subject of the colored population of the island of Cuba. "Are you not afraid," said I to him one day, "that they will rise up in a body against their masters and make a bloody attempt to shake off the burden of servitude?"

"I have no such fears," replied he. "The blacks have no arms, and there is nobody to put arms into their hands. Our shores are lined with strong military posts all along our narrow island, which would quickly put down an unarmed and undisciplined insurrection. Besides, the different classes of our colored population hate each other too cordially ever to concert together a plan of rebellion. The negro of Africa, the bravest and most spirited of them all, born a free man, detests the submissive Creole, the native of the country, and the Creole negro abhors the dogged, surly, and unchristianized African. The mulatto looks with scorn upon the negro as his inferior, and the negro regards the mulatto as a degenerate mongrel; while the quadroon, who in his own estimation is almost a white man, regards both the negro and mulatto with equal disdain. Not many years since, three Indians, from the coast of Florida, did what all the blacks of the island never did, and I believe and trust never will do—they filled the whole country for nearly three years with robbery, bloodshed, burnings, and consternation.

"The Spanish government, by virtue of some treaty or other with the Indians of Florida, of which I can tell you nothing else, send them an annual present of European merchandise. A vessel is usually despatched from Havana for this



purpose, and some dignitary of the Church or zealous missionary accompanies the expedition. In the last year of the last century the bishop of Havana, the venerable Tres Palacios—may God rest his soul!—made the voyage to Florida. The good priest celebrated the imposing ceremonies of our religion with so much pomp, explained its mysteries with so much clearness and eloquence, and read the Latin prayers in his missal with so much unction, that the hearts of the poor savages were touched; many consented to receive baptism on the spot, and the bishop returned, bringing with him as the trophies of his peaceful victory three Indian boys, who had been delivered to him to be instructed in the learning of the white man and the doctrines of the true faith. The young savages were at first delighted with the change in their situation. They were highly gratified with the elegant European dresses in which they were clothed by their patron, and to which they added a multitude of trinkets received as presents, and fantastically disposed on their persons. In spite of the habit of apparent indifference to everything extraordinary in which they had been educated, they could not help expressing the feeling of natural astonishment which rose in their minds as they walked the streets of Havana and beheld the various labors and devices of civilization. In a short time, however, they became familiar with the wonders around them, and with their astonishment vanished the piety which the good ecclesiastic supposed he had kindled in their hearts. He discovered that his juvenile neophytes were lazy, proud, intractable; that they loved rum and tobacco, and were fond of sleeping when their stomachs were full. Sometimes they would perform their wild dances, with loud and heathenish cries, in the court-yard of the churchman's palace, disturbing his religious meditations. On one of these occasions, when the old bishop sallied forth in his night-cap, cane in hand, and with a most determined demeanor, to quiet the uproar, they actually had the insolence to trip up his heels, and to continue their dance around the body of the sprawling dignitary, shouting and

yelling with greater glee than ever. They had no objections to figuring in religious processions; they carried the blazing torches with an air, and bore the standards with profound gravity and solemnity, but they resolutely refused to learn their prayers, and could by no means be taught the alphabet. They would often absent themselves for several days together, to wander on the woody sides of the mountains, shaping bows and arrows after the fashion of their native country, making a rude sort of lance out of a hard kind of wood, the ends of which they rendered yet harder by fire, and they would return, with their clothes fairly torn from their backs, bringing home a wild pig or a huge bunch of paroquets. In short, they were so wholly insubordinate, and so decidedly savage and pagan in their habits and tastes, that the bishop was forced to give up the idea of making them into good Catholics, who should return to spread the light of the Gospel and the power of the Church in their native land.

“At length they committed some offence against the laws. What it was I either never heard or have forgotten; but an offence they committed for which they were apprehended, found guilty, and sentenced to imprisonment at the Arsenal, in Havana. The bishop, I believe, was glad to get rid of them, for he saw that the seed he had sown had fallen upon a rock, and he was now sure that his intractable pupils would be well looked to, and kept out of mischief at least. The Arsenal, you know, I suppose, is situated a little without the city, but connected with it by a gate called *Punta de la Tenaza*, and surrounded by high and strong walls of its own. But, if you have never visited it, you can scarcely form an idea of the activity that prevails there. It is a little town within itself. The vast magazines and storehouses, the dwellings of the officers and superintendents, the barracks of the soldiers, the dormitories of the prisoners, the shops in which various mechanical occupations are exercised, occupy the circuit of the walls with numerous buildings. Wharves extend along the edge of the water; vessels are coming and departing, taking in or discharging

their cargoes ; men are hurrying to and fro with packages ; and a cluster of mills in the midst, turned by a canal from the river, and continually employed in sawing huge trunks of the native trees of the island, fill the place with the continual noise of the machinery. Were it not that you saw here and there an officer in military uniform, sentinels pacing about, and chains fastened to the arms or legs of many of the laborers, you might fancy yourself in a common seaport. Thither the young delinquents were sent, and, each being fitted with a couple of iron rings about his ankles, they were set to work in assisting to load and unload the government vessels. The employment was not much to their liking, and, after remaining there a few months, they took advantage of an opportunity to make their escape, and sought refuge in *Las Vegas de Falaco*.

“The tract of country called by this name begins about twenty leagues or more to the west of Havana, on the northern shore of the island, and stretches toward Cape San Antonio as far as the settlement of Mantua and Guanes, which lie on its remotest boundary. It is fertile as the garden of Eden, and its wide extent is watered by numerous wandering rivers, whose banks are encumbered with the luxuriance of their wild vegetation. A few miserable habitations are scattered here and there along the streams, or grouped into hamlets and dirty villages. In these live the herdsmen entrusted with the care of the immense droves of cattle, horses, and swine pastured in the country back of the settlements, and here also dwell the tobacco planters, who cultivate patches of the rich, deep soil on the margin of the rivers. No part of Cuba is naturally finer than this, and none is peopled with a worse race. I hate the rascals, for they once stole from me the finest horse in the world, an English hunter, which cost me sixty doubloons, and I was obliged to pursue my journey on a stunted, hard-trotting jade, which I purchased of a dingy mulatto, who called himself a white man, and who had the conscience to ask me a hundred dollars for her. I dare say he stole the animal. Hither the wreckers, who haunt the keys on the coast, gangs of run-

away sailors, who live by the plunder of the merchant ships that come into their power, resort to spend their ill-gotten wealth in gaming and debauchery. These desperadoes keep their boats moored under the thick boughs and foliage of the mangroves, whose trunks rise in the shallows out of the very brine. You might look round on the neighboring shores and sand-banks without meeting the least indication of anything in which a human being could put to sea, but let a disaster happen to a merchant vessel off the coast, and two hundred boats, perhaps, will at once make their appearance, as if they rose from the bosom of the waters. These fellows lead a merry life on shore, where they find no lack of boon companions. The dice-box rattles all day in the taverns, and the guitar begins to tinkle as the sun goes down. Brawls are kindled among them over their wine, blood is shed, and the murderer takes refuge in the keys. Sometimes one of these fellows who ventures on shore with too much money lies stark and stiff by the roadside the next morning.

“The three young savages chose the village of Guanes, situated on the river of that name, as the place of their retreat. It lies, as I have already I think mentioned, near the farther extremity of Las Vegas. Here they contrived to exchange their prison dresses for checked shirts and pantaloons, with broad-brimmed straw hats, the usual garb of the country people. They subsisted easily, and lived in a manner quite to their taste among the lazy settlers. They fished a little in the streams, knocked down game in the uncultivated lands, loitered about the taverns, slept in the shade, and, when pressed by the harder necessity than usual, lent a hand in gathering and curing tobacco. I never heard that they did any harm while they remained in this part of the country; at all events, I believe they behaved themselves quite as unexceptionably, to say the least, as the rest of the inhabitants.

“Our government occasionally sends commissioners to make the circuit of the island, and to clear it of runaway criminals, and of vagabonds who can give no account of themselves.



The idea is a good one, in my opinion, for by this means a rogue is kept in the place where he was born and where his character is known, and, when convicts who have escaped from justice repeat their crimes, they are carried back to punishment. After the three Indians had been for several months in the neighborhood of Guanés, certain of these magistrates arrived at that village. The Indians were informed against by a herdsman with whom they had some dispute. They were seized and brought before the commissioners. It appeared that they were not ancient inhabitants of the place, and they could show no passport from any other; it was, therefore, concluded that they could not be there for any good purpose. They were accordingly sent, with a guard, to Havana, where they were immediately recognized as the fugitives. They were remanded to prison, loaded with heavier chains, and condemned to severer tasks. Their old patron, the good Bishop Tres Palacios, was dead; there was nobody to intercede in their behalf. The prisoners bore their fate with a kind of sullen resignation, but their keepers knew little of what was passing in their minds. They had been brought back from what they most loved—idleness and liberty—to what they most hated—labor and imprisonment. The indignities with which they had been treated roused in their bosoms all the spirit of their race, and filled them with an intense thirst for revenge. Their confinement was short, and it was soon rumored in Havana that they had again escaped from the Arsenal. On the second morning after their escape, a traveller, passing between Mantua and Guanés, a little after sunrise, was stopped by a scene of horror and desolation. A crowd of people of all colors had gathered around the smoking ruins of a cluster of cottages which had been fired in the night. The trees by which they were once overshadowed had been scorched and seared in the fierce flame, and their half-burned leaves were dropping in the faces of those who stood below. The earth around was stained with blood, and the prints of knees and feet strongly pressed into it showed that a mortal

struggle had been there. Several bodies of men, women, and children, marked with deep gashes, lay near. They had evidently been slain in the endeavor to escape by flight, for the expression of horror and fear yet stood on the faces of the dead. One or two among the group, who seemed to have been more successful in their attempts to escape, and whose features were yet convulsed by fright, were telling, in an agitated, incoherent manner, the story of several men of hideous appearances and supernatural strength and swiftness, who had put the firebrand to their houses just at daybreak, and slaughtered the inmates without pity.

"While the multitude were thus intently listening, they were startled by shrill cries from a distance, growing louder every moment; all eyes were instantly turned to the quarter from which they proceeded. A dark cloud of smoke was seen rolling up from among some trees at the distance of half a league, where the spectators knew that there was a dwelling, and the next moment it was surmounted by a dozen arrowy tongues of flame shooting up in the midst. A man and a woman, each carrying a child, made their appearance, running with all their might, and shrieking in an agony of terror for protection. They were pursued at some distance by three dark, strange-looking men, armed with lances, who were gaining rapidly upon them. As soon, however, as they saw the crowd, they stopped, looked at them for a moment, and, turning, went off swiftly in a direction toward the mountains in the interior of the island. In the mean time, the fugitives had reached their friends and fell prostrate on the ground in a state of exhaustion. They were immediately recognized as the family belonging to the house which was seen in flames. Fortunately, none of them were within when the ruffians came. They had observed them, however, from a little distance, and, terrified by the strange fierceness and wildness of their demeanor, had concealed themselves behind some bushes until they saw them setting fire to the house, when they immediately took to flight. In their flight they had been seen and

pursued, and apparently only saved by the accidental circumstance that their pursuers beheld around the ashes of the cottage a larger number of persons than they wished to encounter.

“Who were the perpetrators of these deeds of violence and bloodshed? This was a matter of intense curiosity and anxious conjecture; almost every man had his own answer to the question. Some thought that they might be a party of wreckers from the keys, who had taken this method to revenge the death of a comrade slain in the village of Guanés. Some suggested that an invading force had landed on the island, and was sending out small detachments to ravage the country. The greater number were of opinion that they were the three Indians who had a second time escaped from imprisonment, and who had perpetrated these barbarities in revenge for the inhospitality which had delivered them up. This opinion was confirmed by the description given of their persons by the inmates of the destroyed cottages. But they added that, whoever they might be, it was their most solemn belief that they were in league with the powers of darkness. Nothing else could endue them with such an irresistible strength, or render them so completely proof against all attempts to wound them, or give such a demoniac expression to their features. The idea took strong hold of the superstitious people of Las Vegas, and the voices of the group sank into a low murmur as they conferred together on this fearful subject.

“Nothing could equal the panic which prevailed in the settlements of Mantua and Guanés all that day. The families who lived in the solitary houses came into the villages, and the villagers crowded into the stronger and more defensible buildings. Every weapon that could be found was put in order: disused blunderbusses were fitted with new flints, rusty broadswords were sharpened, and an old swivel, that had lain for years half buried in the earth before the *cabile*, or town-hall, of Guanés, was dug out, loaded, and set upon two wooden

wheels in front of the dwelling of the Alcalde. The rest of that day passed without any further alarm, but, on the next, news was brought of other massacres and burnings in the neighborhood. On the third morning, a party of twenty men, all armed, left the village of Guanés to visit the herds in the back country. They entered several houses, the inhabitants of which lay murdered within them or before the doors. They found the herds scattered, and saw many carcasses of cattle and horses lying where they had been pastured.

“In the mean time, the devastation committed by these strange beings increased the terror with which they were everywhere regarded. Wild stories were told of their exploits; of their gigantic strength and prodigious swiftness; of their swimming and fording rapid rivers, which would have swept away the most powerful man on the island; of their scaling perpendicular mountains and leaping tremendous chasms; of the supernatural suddenness with which they came upon the defenceless, and the astonishing swiftness with which they disappeared when the odds were against them. All the inhabitants of the district of Las Vegas followed the example of those in the neighborhood of Mantua and Guanés, and removed into the villages for safety, or collected in the larger and less exposed habitations. No man would venture into the fields alone, but, when the necessity of their affairs called them forth, they went in parties of a dozen or twenty men, well armed, and on the watch against the enemy. I remember a singular instance of the extreme fear inspired by these marauders. One day a young negro slave, living at an estate called El Rosario, in the jurisdiction of Consolación del Norte, came running home to tell that the Indians were in sight, and were making toward the house. The family consisted of the master of the house, his wife and three children, his wife’s brother, and a female slave with her two boys. The husband was for seeking safety by flight, his wife and her brother were for barricading the doors, and neither would follow the advice of the other. No time was to be lost. The husband left



his house with a loaded musket on his shoulder, and climbed a tree hard by, of the kind we called the *guacia*, screening himself from sight among its thick boughs and tufts of pale-green leaves, while his wife and her brother bolted the door with all possible expedition. The ruffians were soon at the dwelling; the affrighted owner of the house saw them from his hiding-place, armed with bows and arrows slung upon their shoulders, and carrying enormous lances made of the trunks of sapling trees, with an iron blade fixed in the smaller end. They were men of short stature, but broad-chested and wonderfully strong-limbed, with straight, jetty hair, and round, wild eyes beneath arched and coal-black eyebrows. They first tried to open the door, and, finding it fastened, without uttering a word to each other, they raised their lances to a level with their heads and drove the butt-end violently against it to beat it in. Every loud stroke went to the heart of the poor wretch in his concealment. He lay quaking with fear, just able to support himself among the branches, and to keep the musket he held from dropping to the ground, but without the courage or the strength to discharge it. The door at length gave way; the brother presented himself with a musket, but was struck to the floor before he could fire, and the murderers passed into the house over his dead body. Shrieks and howls of agony and supplication burst from the building, and through the open door the wife and her children were seen clinging to the knees of the savages, and butchered in the midst of their cries for mercy. The bodies of the two negro boys, bleeding with deep wounds, were then tossed out, and the mother, rushing forth to make her escape, was overtaken and pinned with one of their huge lances to the ground. When the work of death was finished, and the house again silent, one of the murderers came out with a smoking brand in his hand, which he laid to the windward side of the building, covered it with a handful of dry sticks and twigs, and blew them into a flame. The three then departed, leaving the pusillanimous spectator of their bloody deeds half dead with horror

and fear. He did not venture to come down until the house was nearly consumed, when he slipped to the ground and crawled trembling to the next village.

“I should lengthen out my story until another day were I to give you a catalogue of the murders committed by these men. All the country between the city of Havana and Cape San Antonio, called among us by the name of *Vuelta Abajo*, on both sides of the island, was the scene of their crimes, and was kept in a state of continual alarm. Their ravages were generally committed in the daytime, from the early dawn to nightfall, when they retired, as they also did when pursued, to the woods—the ancient woods of the interior, thick, dark, and tangled with shrubs and immense vines, and full of impassable thickets. On one day their ravages would be committed on the northern shore; on the next they would have passed the mountains, and dwellings would smoke and their inmates be slaughtered on the opposite coast. The officers of justice, seeking them where their enormities had just been committed, would be apprised by messengers of still more recent crimes at the distance of twenty leagues. What occasioned no small wonder was that all the work of bloodshed and destruction was performed by them in silence. Not a word was heard to issue from their lips by any one who had been near them, and yet had the good fortune to escape with his life. They gave no answer to entreaties for mercy, nor were they ever seen to confer together, though they always moved in concert. They passed from place to place as mutely and rapidly as ghosts of the dead.

“A few leagues this side of Cape San Antonio, where the island begins to grow narrow, is a remarkable cave. It passes through a continuation of the great midland ridge of the mountains, and reaches from one shore to the other. At the northern entrance are several chambers that seem chiselled from the solid rock, and which, I have little doubt, are the work of the ancient inhabitants of the country. They are furnished with benches of stone, alcoves, doors passing from one

to another, and roofs regularly vaulted, from which the trickling of water is constantly heard in the silence and darkness. Farther on the cave is a mere cleft between rocky walls; I once visited it with some friends. We penetrated to the distance of nearly a league, till we came to where a subterraneous brook crossed the passage and a chasm above let in the light of day; but, being sickened by the strong odor of the vampires and birds of night that clung to the roof, and having come to the end of the clew which we had fastened at the mouth of the cave, we were obliged to return. In the recesses of this cave the superstitious and ignorant people of Las Vegas believed that the three Indians propitiated the devil by sacrifices of the animals they had stolen, and received the gift of irresistible strength and the power of transporting themselves in a moment to whatever place they pleased. I believe, however, that it is a mistake to suppose that they made this spot their frequent haunt, though it is certain they were often seen in the neighborhood. They were too wary to trust themselves where their retreat could be cut off, or where the fierce dogs of the island could be let loose upon them. They encamped for sleep only on the steep sides of the mountains, and never but once in the same place. Yet the idea of their subterraneous worship of the powers of darkness added greatly to the terror with which they were regarded.

“The many and horrible murders committed by these men, and the destruction of the herds, the abandonment of so many fine estates for want of tenants who would venture to occupy them, threatened the depopulation of Vuelta Abajo, and drew the attention of government. Large rewards were offered, which were at length increased to five thousand dollars, for the head of each of the offenders. This measure had the effect intended. Large parties of men were collected, well armed with muskets, pistols, and broadswords, and including in their numbers a good proportion of *comisionados*, *Alcaldes*, *juezes*, *pedianos*, members of the Holy Brotherhood, and all the different officers empowered to pursue and arrest the violators of

the laws. They were accompanied by the strong and fierce dogs trained in Cuba to hunt runaway negroes, one breed of which is merely employed to track the fugitive, and the other to seize and drag him down. These expeditions were wholly unsuccessful. Often did they return without having discovered the object of their search. In some instances they followed the track of the savages for whole days together, encamping, when night overtook them, in some cleft of the mountains in the wilderness of the interior, where they kept up huge fires till morning, and stationed an armed watch to guard against their mysterious enemies. At length, however, their dogs led them to the hiding-place of the outlaws. After a weary march along the sides of the mountains, they found themselves at the foot of a lofty and precipitous pile of rocks, which the animals, barking at the foot, in vain essayed to scale. Above, on the summit of the crags, was a thick growth of trees and mountain shrubs. The men took the dogs on their shoulders and began to climb the precipice.

“They had scarcely begun to ascend when the whole party was startled by a loud yelping, and, on looking, they saw that two of the dogs had fallen from the shoulders of their bearers, struck through with arrows, and dropped to the foot of the precipice, quivering in the agonies of death. One of their number was also severely wounded by an arrow from the thickets on the summit, and, as he was preparing to descend, was transfixed by a second, and fell headlong from the rock on which he stood. The men at the bottom of the precipice and on the crags answered with a discharge of musketry, aimed at the trees which they supposed to be the hiding-place of the enemy, but without effect. Arrows still came from above, and *chusos*,\* or javelins, thrown with fatal and unerring certainty sometimes from one quarter, sometimes from

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\* The *chuso* is a weapon of about four feet in length and an inch in diameter. It is made of a very solid and heavy wood, hardened at one end in the fire and brought to a sharp point. The African negroes of Cuba throw it with great force and certainty of aim.



another, as the savages shifted their ground to avoid the aim of their assailants. At length the whole party, discouraged by the disadvantage at which they were contending, and by the slaughter of their companions, withdrew, carrying off three of their number dead and five severely wounded, and leaving nearly half their dogs at the foot of the precipice.

“More than one attempt of the same kind was afterward made, with no better success. Nearly two years and a half had elapsed since the Indians began to devastate the island, and still their ravages continued unchecked. Impunity had not made them forget their usual caution, nor did the multitude of their murders seem to have satiated their thirst for blood. I question if ever there were three men in the world, short of the degree of monarch, who made so much havoc among their fellow-creatures in the same space of time. At length, however, a bolder and more determined band was collected than had ever before undertaken the expedition. I may justly say this, for I well knew several of the persons who joined it, and greater dare-devils were not in all the dominions of my master, the King of Spain—men who feared nothing, either in this world or in the next. They were accompanied by several relatives of persons who had been killed by the Indians, and who were resolved to lose their own lives rather than fail in the attempt to execute justice upon the assassins. Their number amounted to about a hundred and fifty, and they were accompanied by sixty of the best-trained and fiercest dogs on the island. After tracking the bandits for more than half a day, they approached the place of their retreat, on the steep side of a mountain covered with broken rocks, from the clefts of which sprung shrubs and small trees, dwarfed by the dryness of the soil. At the foot of the place where they lay was a *quebrada*, the dry bed of a torrent, forming a ravine, with precipitous sides running obliquely along the breast of the mountain. Into this ravine the party were descending, carrying their dogs down the steep banks, when they were assailed by arrows from the opposite side, by

which several of the animals were killed. In all their combats with the people of the island, the outlaws aimed particularly at the dogs, whom they dreaded more than even the men, not only because they brought their pursuers to their place of retreat, but because they were so formidable and so difficult to wound in a close encounter. Arrived at the bottom of the ravine, the party paused for a moment, to take a view of the precipice above them, and to select the best places for making the ascent. It appeared that the Indians had intrenched themselves behind a kind of natural parapet of rock, through the clefts of which grew a few bushes and trees, but so thinly as not to prevent their assailants below from occasionally catching glimpses of their persons while in the act of aiming their weapons. In the mean time, their pursuers were not inactive. Every stirring of the boughs above, every appearance of a hand or face, was answered by a discharge of musketry. But the arrows and javelins still continued to come from the rocks, many of their dogs and several of their companions were already killed, and it was evident that no time was to be wasted in so disadvantageous a position. A part of the men were therefore assigned to carry the dogs, and the rest to watch the movements of the enemy; and, these being arranged so as to follow each other alternately, the whole party began to ascend by two different ways. The slaughter made by the Indians was now greater than ever, as they were enabled, from the near approach of the assailants, to aim their weapons with greater certainty and more deadly effect. Six of the men had already fallen dead, many were severely wounded, and more than thirty of the dogs were killed. It was horrible to hear the yells of these animals, mingled strangely with the groans of dying men, and to see their struggles when wounded, springing furiously from the shoulders of their bearers, and sometimes the animal and his bearer precipitated down the rocks together.

“But the combat was now near an end. One of the party, a *comisionado* whom I knew, a man of great strength of body,

firm nerves, and keen sight, had observed, through some boughs on the top of the rocks, the face of one of the outlaws looking down. He kept his eye steadily fixed on the spot as he went, and shortly afterward the savage stepped forth from behind his intrenchment with an arrow fitted to his bow-string, and raised it to his eye. Just as he came to the spot the wind parted the branches before him and gave the *comisionado* a full view of his person. In an instant he levelled his piece and fired—but the arrow had already left the bow of the Indian, and both the combatants dropped dead at the same moment. A shout of triumph was raised by the whole party as they saw the body of the Indian beginning to fall heavily over the rock through the shrubs on its edge. The next moment they saw a dark, brawny arm extended after it, seizing it by the hair of the head, as if to draw it back. Twenty muskets were instantly discharged in that direction; the brawny arm suddenly let go its hold, and tossed convulsively upward, and the lifeless bodies of two savages fell together down the precipice through the crashing boughs, in sight of their pursuers. Encouraged by this success, they sprang with all expedition to the top of the rock, but the third Indian was nowhere to be seen.

“They now turned to examine the bodies of the outlaws who lay dead near where they had fallen. They evidently belonged to the Indian race, from the peculiarities which I have already mentioned, and which the party had now an opportunity of examining at leisure. They had on no other clothing than a pair of loose trousers, and a kind of belt passing over one shoulder, to which was fastened a bundle of arrows. Their forms were exceedingly muscular, bearing the signs of prodigious vigor and activity, and of that period of life when men most rejoice in their own strength. The elder, it was judged, could not be more than twenty-five years of age, and the other perhaps three years younger. The sun was already sinking when they arrived on the heights which the Indians had occupied, and, weary and wounded, they encamped for a few hours of repose on the very spot without



attempting any pursuit of him who had fled. At daybreak they set out on their return to the villages, carrying their dead and wounded, and the bodies of the slain banditti. As they entered the inhabited country, the people came flocking about them to gaze on the lifeless features and powerless limbs of those who had been so long objects of awe and affright: the swift, powerful, invulnerable beings whose crime had hitherto seemed as if destined never to meet with either check or retribution. The country people assisted in bearing the dead and wounded to the town of Consolacion del Norte, where the bodies of the *comisionado* and his companions were buried with great ceremony and every mark of respect and sorrow. The heads of the Indians were cut off, and sent from the district where they were slain to the Captain-General at Havana; their quarters were suspended by the highways; and their enormous lances, their bows, arrows, and javelins, picked up where they fell, were preserved, for a memorial of the exploit, in the houses of those who led the expedition against them.

"The third Indian was never again seen in Vuelta Abajo. He passed along the midland range of mountains, and shortly afterward appeared in Vuelta Arriba, which means, you know, that part of the island lying eastward of Havana. Here he renewed the work of burning and massacre among the unguarded and defenceless inhabitants, and became as terrible to them as he had been to the people of the western part of the island. Warned by the fate of his companions, he never stood on the defence, but fled when threatened by a superior force. He abandoned the use of the bow and javelin, which had proved impotent to protect his comrades in their rocky fortress, and carried only his huge lance, the weapon of attack and slaughter. Hitherto, neither he nor the other two had ever been seen on horseback; now he was nearly always so. He would leap on the back of one of the horses of the country, wild and unbroken as ever ran in the forest, and ride him furiously without bridle or rein, guiding him with his lance alone; and, when the animal dropped down from fatigue, he



was instantly mounted on another. Woe to the man whom he saw alone and on foot in the open country; he was sure to overtake him, and, aiming a stroke at him in passing, to leave him dead on the spot. Cattle and horses without number were killed by him in the same manner—pierced between the shoulders with all the dexterity of a practiced bull-fighter. So true was his aim that, of all the animals he destroyed, not one was known to be despatched by more than a single wound. Sometimes he would dismount, and, cutting out the tongues of the cattle he had killed, would hang them to his belt for future repast. Throughout the *Vuelta Arriba*, the inhabitants of the country bordering upon the forest or the mountains no longer thought themselves safe in the solitary houses, and, like the people of the western districts, resorted to the villages for safety.

“I am sensible that the history I am giving you is an extraordinary one, and I see in your countenance the marks of incredulity. I have no answer to make to your doubts but the simple one that I am relating facts yet fresh in the memory of thousands among the people of this island. No man acquainted with Cuba and its inhabitants will pronounce it impossible that they should take place; and, if they have no other fault than that of appearing a little wonderful and surprising, I hope you will not think them the less authentic.

“I am now going to relate one of the most remarkable incidents connected with the story of this man-killer. At a little distance from the town of San Juan de los Remedios resided an honest but not over-rich man, an emigrant from old Spain, named José de Pereira. He had married a native of the island, and became the father of a very pretty daughter, of whom he was extremely fond, and whom he had instructed in accomplishments somewhat above her fortune. Her beauty, her graceful manners and amiable temper, won the heart of the elder son of the wealthy proprietor of a cane-plantation in the neighborhood. He paid her his addresses, which were not rejected; a match was concluded between them, and the wed-

ding-day was already fixed. She was as happy as a young and modest woman can be who is about to marry the man of whose love she is proud; and he was as happy as a young man deeply in love always is when on the point of marriage. The father and mother were scarcely less so at seeing their daughter well settled in life, and it was thought that the good couple would stretch their means a little to celebrate the nuptial ceremonies with becoming splendor and merriment. As yet, the Indian had never appeared in the immediate neighborhood of San Juan de los Remedios, nor had the inhabitants thought of resorting to any unusual precautions for protecting themselves against his violence. One morning the father had gone out to look at his little plantation of bananas and maize, and the mother to talk over the approaching nuptials with a neighbor, while Anita de Pereira, the daughter, was busy in an inner apartment of the house, working with her own fair hands some article of dress to be worn at the ceremony. There was no one else in the house but a negro woman in the next room. Suddenly Anita heard a violent shriek, and the sound of footsteps passing swiftly over the floor. She rushed to the door, opened it, and saw before her a short, brawny, savage-looking man, his stiff, black hair standing upright all over his head, half naked, and carrying a long, heavy lance in his hand. She looked round instinctively for help, and, beholding no one else in sight—for the negro woman who had alarmed her with the shriek had fled through a postern door—she sank to the ground in a swoon.

“In the mean time, the domestic had alarmed the neighborhood, and several men came running to the spot with arms in their hands. As they came up they saw the outlaw at some distance, on horseback, carrying the lifeless form of the young woman before him, and galloping off swiftly toward the mountains. The distracted father and mother, informed of what had happened, arrived at the cottage just in time to see him disappearing with his prize over a distant eminence. The news was not slow in spreading to all the neighboring plantations,

and to the town of San Juan de los Remedios, and a considerable multitude, prompted by various motives of curiosity, sympathy, and the desire of making themselves of importance, soon gathered about the old man's door. Among the rest appeared a young man of manly figure and bold and frank demeanor, but with a deep air of distress and anxiety on his countenance. The crowd that stood about the distressed father, talking loudly and earnestly to him and to each other, and offering a thousand discordant counsels, divided voluntarily to let him pass. It was Ramon de Aguarda, the intended husband of Anita. He approached and offered his hand to Pereira, who grasped it convulsively. 'We have lost Anita,' said he, in a half-choked voice.

"'I shall find her,' answered the young man, 'and that before the sea-breeze springs up again. I will pursue the robber and bring her back, or never return.'

"The garrulous crowd were silent as they heard the strong, determined tone of Aguarda's voice, and when he finished, a low murmur ran through it as the bystanders spoke to each other, commending the fearless and resolute spirit of the young man.

"'Who is there among you,' said he again, 'that will go with me to the rescue of Anita de Pereira?'

"'I will go,' was the answer of many voices at once, and there arose a great struggle in the crowd among those who were pressing forward to offer their services. Every one loved Anita, and respected Aguarda for his warm-hearted and generous temper.

"'I thank you, my neighbors,' resumed the young man. 'I could not have expected less of you. Since you are so ready to accompany me, I must request such of you as have not brought your arms to send for them immediately, and that you will provide yourselves, as soon as possible, with horses, and with dogs to track the ruffian; we will set out from this place in a quarter of an hour.'

"Great was the haste and bustle in arming and preparing

for the expedition. The planters willingly supplied the adventurers with dogs and horses. Several young gentlemen of the town of San Juan de los Remedios came to join the party, ambitious of distinguishing themselves in the rescue of the rustic beauty. At the appointed time a company of fifty men were assembled, armed, and on horseback, with negroes on foot, holding the dogs in long leashes. One of the animals was let loose to track the Indian, and the party, following the direction in which he had disappeared, set off, under the conduct of Aguarda. They traversed the open country, and arrived where the skirts of the great interior forest, stretching down the sides of the mountains toward the shore, enclose glades of pasture-ground. Here they added to their number several *monteros*, or foresters, to serve for guides in the expedition. The *monteros*, as you may perhaps know, are the keepers of the large herds which graze in this island on estates four or five leagues in circumference, and for the most part overshadowed with trees. They are as much at home in the woods of Cuba as your own Indians in those of North America. They know all the thousand intricacies and crossing paths of the forest, the ravines, precipices, and streams, as well as I know the regular avenues and alleys of my own plantation. They will travel in the woods from city to city, and from end to end of the island, guiding their way by the sun, the stars, the course of the rivers, and the direction of the wind, which you know blows regularly seaward during the night, and landward during the day.

“One of the *monteros* had seen the Indian pass with his prize, and pointed out the prints of his horse’s feet. The party now rode into those lofty woods, along a gradual ascent toward the mountains, by a broad path among old trees that had stood there ever since the conquest of the island—groves of palmetto royal, the wild cotton-tree, the pawpaw, and others of equally gigantic stature, whose smooth trunks, rising to a prodigious height, uplift a close roof of thick-woven bough and massive foliage. So lofty a roof there is not in the proud-



est temples of Europe, nor one which more effectually excludes the sun, whose beams for ages have played upon the summit of those trees without penetrating to the ground. As they went forward, the forest, after several hours' travelling, became thicker and more choked with underwood, and the path narrower, until it could hardly be distinguished from others, made by cattle, intersecting in all directions. They were now obliged to ride one behind another, and as they ascended a little declivity they found it difficult to urge their horses between the close trunks and encroaching branches. At length one of the *monteros* made a sign for the party to stop.

“‘Here, gentlemen,’ said he, ‘you must dismount; the forest beyond this place will not admit of the passing of a horse and rider. And here lies a poor beast that has been ridden hard to-day, and who, if he could speak, would thank the woods for being so thick; his master could get him no farther.’ As he spoke, he broke off a twig from one of the shrubs, and, stripping it of the leaves, turned to the side of the path, and with a smart stroke started up from a kind of a recess a horse covered with sweat and half-dried foam. ‘This, perhaps,’ continued he, ‘is the horse that carried the fellow you are looking for. He has neither saddle nor bridle, and yet his back shows that he has been sat upon by a heavy rider.’

“The party pressed round to get a sight of the animal, a shaggy, wild-looking creature, with a heavy, tangled mane on both sides of his neck, a long forelock hanging between the eyes, and a sweeping tail. He stretched himself for a moment, then snorted, broke through the bushes, and was out of sight.

“‘That is the Indian’s horse,’ said another *montero*, the same who had seen him carrying off the young woman and had showed his traces to the pursuers; ‘the very beast on whose back I saw him this morning. I would swear to him before the *Alcalde*. I fancy the rider cannot be far off.’ All the party were of the same opinion. A short consultation was held, in which it was agreed that an attempt should be made

to recover the young woman without letting loose their dogs until the rescue was effected, for fear that they might attack the captive also. They then dismounted, left the horses in the care of some negroes, and began to thread the more intricate mazes of the forest. They soon heard at a distance the baying of the hound whom they had let off at setting out, and, proceeding for two or three miles in that direction, they came to a lofty precipice, not far from the bottom of which grew a cluster of branching trees of great height. At the foot of these trees the dog was whimpering and barking, and occasionally springing against the trunks. The party were perplexed at this circumstance; they looked up into the boughs for a solution of the mystery, but could discover nothing. They called off the animal and attempted to make him recover the track which they supposed he had lost, but in vain; he immediately returned to the spot. The face of the precipice was smooth, perpendicular, nearly thirty feet in height, and quite as impossible to scale without the assistance of a ladder as the wall of a house. It stood at several paces from the trees in front, so that it seemed nobody could pass from them to its summit. Along the steeps to the right and left of it rose a thick undergrowth of young trees, filled up with thorny and interwoven vines, of that species which we call *unas de Gato*, or cat's-claws, and which formed an impenetrable barrier, stretching to a great distance on either hand, and without any opening through which the outlaw could have passed with his captive. Somebody suggested that, as one of the trees was easily climbed, he might have concealed himself among the leaves and boughs of its top. A *montero* immediately sprang into it, ascended out of sight among the foliage, and called out to those below that there was no living thing in the tree but himself. They now became convinced that the hound had been misled by a false scent, and some proposed to go back to the place where the Indian's horse was found lying, and let slip another dog upon his track. As for Aguarda, it is scarcely possible to describe his chagrin at being thus cruelly disap-

pointed when he thought himself just upon the point of rescuing from a dreadful fate the being he most loved. 'The cur shall never deceive anybody else in this manner,' said he, and levelled his musket to blow out the creature's brains, when one of his companions held his arm, and pointed to where the *montero*, who had descended half-way down the tree, began to walk along one of its branches that bent with his weight to a horizontal position, until, coming to the summit of the perpendicular rock, at the foot of which the whole party stood, he leaped upon the top of it. The mystery was now cleared up. It was evident to all that the savage had climbed the tree with his prize and passed along the branches to the precipice before them. Aguarda caught the poor animal whose life he was just about to take and caressed it in a transport of joy.

"The *monteros* drew their *machetes*, the sharp broadswords which they usually carry about with them, and proceeded to cut a passage through the thorny and tangled fence of creeping vines on the side where it seemed thinnest and most pervious. This they did with great dexterity and quickness, and in a few minutes had formed a kind of arched passage, through which the company passed by a short circuit to the summit of the precipice. A negro carried thither the hound, and the animal was no sooner put to the ground than he recovered the track of the outlaw, darted off like lightning, and was out of sight. In a few minutes they heard him uttering a sharp and frequent bark, a sure signal that he had found the object of his pursuit. The party rushed forward and soon issued into an open glade in the forest, where the sun came in from above, and a spring welled out from a stony basin and lost itself in thick grass. At the farther end of the glade rose the rocky side of a mountain, seamed obliquely with a *quebrada*, or deep ravine. The savage was seen retreating to a huge rock of stone at the foot of the mountain, while the dog was running round him in swift circles, and barking incessantly. You know, perhaps, that it is impossible for the runaways of our island to kill one of those nimble and quick-sighted animals

without the advantage of a rock at their back. The savage, as soon as he saw his pursuers, took to flight. He sprang up the side of the mountain and disappeared over the ravine amid a shower of balls. The fierce dogs, heretofore kept in leashes, were let slip after him, but they were soon stopped by precipices which they did not venture to descend.

"The first thought of Aguarda was to look for Anita de Pereira. She was found gagged with one of her own handkerchiefs, her delicate arms pinioned, and one of them tied fast to a tree in the edge of the glade, where the savage had secured her until he could kill the dog that was giving his enemies notice of his retreat. Her lover cut the cords by which she was bound, and received her thanks and tears in his bosom. That night was a happy one at the house of old Pereira, and the event of that day hastened, by a fortnight at least, the ceremony that crowned the wishes of Aguarda. This escape of the bandit seemed to embolden him in the commission of his atrocities. I have heard many people express the opinion that all the murders, burnings, and destruction of herds committed by him and his companions during the whole time they remained in the *Vuelta Abajo* did not equal those committed by this man alone in the *Vuelta Arriba*. In addition to the price set by government upon his head, the proprietors of different *haciendas* in the island, abandoned through fear of him, offered large rewards for his death or apprehension.

"Yet this man, in the midst of his hatred of the people of the island, and the bloody deeds with which he gratified his thirst for revenge, seems to have still felt some of those natural sympathies which attach us to our race, and to have yearned after the pleasure of seeing a human face, and hearing a human voice, in peace and kindness. A short time after the adventure of Anita de Pereira he stole a little child, a daughter of a *balomer* who lived in a small hamlet between San Lorenzo and La Calidad. He kept her with him several months, treating her with great kindness, feeding her



with the abundant wild fruits of the country, and with the flesh of cattle which he slew on the *haciendas*. After several attempts she was at length taken from him, but not until she had contracted a strong attachment for Taito Perico, as he had taught her to call him.

"In the rescue of the little girl the savage was wounded in the thigh, a circumstance which, though it increased his shyness, did not diminish his ferocity. A little more than seven months after his first appearance in the Vuelta Arriba, a company of about thirty children, from the inland city of Puerto Principe, went out to gather the wild fruit we call *marañones*, in the fields a little more than two miles distant from the town. It was then the month of June, and the fruit hung in its golden and ruddy ripeness on the low shrubs, which, mingled with others of different species, overspread a considerable tract of land. Among the children was a fine boy, about eight years of age, named José Maria de Rodriguez. They were all busily engaged in plucking the fruit, in discovering the places where it grew in the greatest abundance, and in jostling each other away from it when discovered, and the air rung with their cheerful voices and innocent laughter. All at once one of them screamed out, 'El Indio! el Indio!' and the troop scattered off like a flock of paroquets at the discharge of a gun. José Maria stood near a clump of bushes, and, thinking they afforded him sufficient concealment, crouched under them close to the ground. The savage, as ill luck would have it, rode to the spot where the boy lay trembling and powerless with fear, and, observing him, checked his horse, stooped toward him, took him up by one arm, and, placing him on the animal before him, rode off to the woods.

"The mother of José Maria was a widow lady of distinction in Puerto Principe; he was her only son, and she was frantic at his loss. Her brother, Don Agostin Arias—who, I remember, was at that time an officer of the militia of Cuba, a gentleman of the true stamp, and of that courage which shows itself not in words but in deeds—came to her

house opposite the church of La Soledad, comforted her by representing that the Indian had not hitherto shown any disposition to destroy his captive, and pledged himself to restore her child. On the first day all endeavors to discover the track of the robber was fruitless. On the third, however, news was brought that he had been several times seen on the sides of the mountain which then went by the name of Loma de Cubitas, whose conical summit, clothed with lofty woods to its highest peak, is seen at a distance of eight leagues from Puerto Principe. Arias immediately gave notice to an acquaintance of the name of Cespedes, a *valenton*, as we call those men who plume themselves upon the possession of extraordinary valor, and who had offered to accompany him in his undertaking to rescue the child. They set off on horseback, armed with guns and pistols, taking with them a negro who carried a weapon of the kind we call a *desjarretadera*, a steel blade in the form of a crescent, fixed in a long handle like that of a lance, and used to hamstring the wild and furious animals of the herds. They arrived at the mountain of Cubitas, and, after penetrating a little way into the old woods on its breast, dismounted, gave their horses in charge to the negro, and separated in search of the child-stealer, with an agreement that he who first heard the report of the other's gun should immediately come to his assistance. Arias had not proceeded far when he heard Cespedes discharge his piece, whether by accident, as he afterward alleged, in springing over the channel of the brook, or whether it was that his valorous soul was assailed by the ignoble passion of fear, I can not say, but the people of Puerto Principe were uncharitable enough to believe the latter. Arias turned immediately, when, as if by a miracle, he saw his nephew near him, almost at his side, sitting against the trunk of a tree, his feet bare, torn with thorns, and covered with blood.

"Arias checked the half-uttered exclamation that rose to the lips of the boy, and ordered him to show him where the Indian was. He pointed up the mountain, and Arias

proceeded as cautiously and as softly as possible in that direction. He soon beheld him, apparently just risen from his seat on the ground. Alarmed, doubtlessly, by the report of the gun, and still more by the noise made by the steps of Arias, he turned his face in that direction. He saw his enemy with his musket levelled—but he saw no more, for Arias fired at that instant, and the savage fell to the ground. He did not, however, let go his weapon, and, in the agony and weakness of dissolution, still seemed striving to collect his strength that he might not die passively and unavenged, and, lying as he did on the slope of the mountain, with his feet toward its base, he grasped his lance in both his hands and held it before him, pointed toward his slayer. Cespedes and the negro came up to him almost at the same moment with Arias. The former valiantly sent another ball through him with one of his pistols, and the latter gave him a stroke on the face with his houghing-knife—but he had already received his death-wound. It was now the hour of five in the afternoon. They laid the dead body on the back of the horse which the negro had ridden, left the mountain, which has ever since borne the name of *Loma del Indio*, in memory of the exploits of Arias, and returned to Puerto Principe, whither they arrived at ten in the evening. The body was exposed in the principal square of the city. Multitudes, of all ages, sexes, and ranks, carrying lanterns, torches, and candles, crowded to look at it, and the day broke before all the spectators had dispersed. I was then in Puerto Principe, and was drawn by the general curiosity to witness the spectacle. I shall never forget St. Anthony's day—the day on which the Indian was killed—the thirteenth of June, I believe, in the year 1807; and the impression that sight made upon me still remains as vivid as on that night. The slain was a youth, it might be, of nineteen years, of low stature, but of the marks of great strength. Shoulders of uncommon breadth, a large head, covered with coal-black hair closely shredded, round, prominent, and glaring eyes, high-arched

eyebrows, a hooked nose, a brawny neck, large, muscular arms and legs, feet and hands as delicately formed as those of the ladies of our own nation—such is the picture of his person. He had on a pair of short, loose trousers, and wore a cord passing through the wound in his thigh as a kind of seton, an expedient suggested, probably, by the rude surgery of his native country. As the mingled crowd stooped over the body to examine it, I remember well the expression of awe that stole over their features, and the subdued tones in which they spoke to each other, and the fuller or fainter light thrown upon the dark face and glassy eyes of the dead, as they approached and retired. Before I withdrew I saw the body nearly covered with drops of wax and tallow from the multitude of lights that had been held over it.

“The next day the boy José Maria and the little girl I have before mentioned were examined before a judicial tribunal to identify the person of the slain, and to justify Arias in putting him to death. The examination was satisfactory, and the body was ordered to be hung in the public square, and to be drawn and quartered. A gibbet was erected, but, while the ceremony of suspension was performing, the pulley by which the body was raised gave way suddenly, and it fell to the ground. The multitudes, who were not yet cured of the superstitious belief of the connection of the Indian with the powers of darkness, recoiled with shrieks and groans, and fell in heaps upon each other.

“A second attempt was made, with better success. The body was afterward dragged at the heels of a horse to a field without the city, where it was dismembered. The trunk was buried in the earth, the hands and legs set up in the public ways, and the head enclosed in an iron cage and fixed upon a pole in the neighboring village of Tanima, and the country delivered forever from the fear of one who had made such waste of human life.

“José Maria de Rodriguez is now an ecclesiastic of note in



Puerto Principe, and curate of the church of La Soledad. I ought not to conceal from you that many suppose that the Indians who for three years committed such frightful ravages were of the tribe of Guachmangos, a fierce, untamable nation of Mexico, and that by some unknown means they had found their way to the island. I know not that there is any other reason for this belief than their fierceness, but I know that there is no other way of accounting for what became of those three savages from Florida than by supposing them to have been the ravagers in question."

Here ends the story of my host of the coffee plantation. It is strange enough in some of its particulars—almost to a degree of incredibility—but it rests not on the credit of my host alone. It was confirmed to me by many other inhabitants of the island, and in its substantial particulars is matter of history.

III.

COMMEMORATIVE DISCOURSES.

VOL. I.—20



## JAMES FENIMORE COOPER.\*

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It is now somewhat more than a year since the friends of James Fenimore Cooper, in this city, were planning to give a public dinner in his honor. It was intended as an expression both of the regard they bore him personally, and of the pride they took in the glory his writings had reflected on the American name. We thought of what we should say in his hearing; in what terms, worthy of him and of us, we should speak of the esteem in which we held him, and of the interest we felt in a fame which had already penetrated to the remotest nook of the earth inhabited by civilized man.

To-day we assemble for a sadder purpose: to pay to the dead some part of the honors then intended for the living. We bring our offering, but he is not here who should receive

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\* A discourse on his life, genius, and writings, delivered at Metropolitan Hall, New York, February 25, 1852.

Since these commemorative discourses were first published, completer lives of several of the subjects of them have been written, namely: "Life and Letters of Washington Irving," by Pierre M. Irving, 4 vols., New York, G. P. Putnam, 1862; "Life and Letters of Fitz-Greene Halleck," by James Grant Wilson, New York, D. Appleton & Co., 1869; and "J. Fenimore Cooper," by Thomas R. Lounsbury, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1883. But what Professor Lounsbury remarks of the discourse on Cooper—that it is "not only the most eloquent tribute that has been paid the dead author, but has remained during many years the fullest account of the life he lived and the work he did"—may be applied to all the others. They are beautiful records of the earlier celebrities of New York city by one who was more or less intimate with them, and whose own distinction imparts a special value to his criticisms of their characters.—ED.



it; in his stead are vacancy and silence; there is no eye to brighten at our words, and no voice to answer. "It is an empty office that we perform," said Virgil, in his melodious verses, when commemorating the virtues of the young Marcellus, and bidding flowers be strewn, with full hands, over his early grave. We might apply the expression to the present occasion, but it would be true in part only. We can no longer do anything for him who is departed, but we may do what will not be without fruit to those who remain. It is good to occupy our thoughts with the example of eminent talents in conjunction with great virtues. His genius has passed away with him; but we may learn, from the history of his life, to employ the faculties we possess with useful activity and noble aims; we may copy his magnanimous frankness, his disdain of everything that wears the faintest semblance of deceit, his refusal to comply with current abuses, and the courage with which, on all occasions, he asserted what he deemed truth, and combated what he thought error.

The circumstances of Cooper's early life were remarkably suited to confirm the natural hardihood and manliness of his character, and to call forth and exercise that extraordinary power of observation which accumulated the materials afterward wielded and shaped by his genius. His father, while an inhabitant of Burlington, in New Jersey, on the pleasant banks of the Delaware, was the owner of large possessions on the borders of the Otsego Lake in our own State, and here, in the newly cleared fields, he built, in 1786, the first house in Cooperstown. To this home Cooper, who was born in Burlington in the year 1789, was conveyed in his infancy, and here, as he informs us in his preface to the "Pioneers," his first impressions of the external world were obtained. Here he passed his childhood, with the vast forest around him, stretching up the mountains that overlook the lake, and far beyond, in a region where the Indian yet roamed, and the white hunter, half Indian in his dress and mode of life, sought his game—a region in which the bear and the wolf were yet

hunted, and the panther, more formidable than either, lurked in the thickets; and tales of wanderings in the wilderness, and encounters with these fierce animals, beguiled the length of the winter nights. Of this place Cooper, although early removed from it to pursue his studies, was an occasional resident throughout his life, and here his last years were wholly passed.

At the age of thirteen he was sent to Yale College, where, notwithstanding his extreme youth—for, with the exception of the poet Hillhouse, he was the youngest of his class, and Hillhouse was afterward withdrawn—his progress in his studies is said to have been honorable to his talents.\* He left the college, after a residence of three years, and became a midshipman in the United States navy.† Six years he followed

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\* Professor Lounsbury relates that he was not allowed to complete his course of study at Yale. It appears that he was more fond of wandering about the wooded hills of New Haven than he was of his books, the neglect of which did not recommend him to those in authority. "Positive faults were, in the course of time, added to negative. A frolic in which he was engaged in his third year . . . led to his dismissal. The father took the boy's side, and the usual struggle followed between the parents and those who, according to a pretty well worn-out educational theory, took the place of parents. In this particular case the latter triumphed, and Cooper left Yale."—ED.

† Before entering the navy, as there were then no naval schools, Cooper was sent to sea, to serve a sort of apprenticeship, in a merchant vessel. In the autumn of 1806 he was placed on board the *Sterling*, Captain John Johnston, of Wiscasset, Maine, and made his first voyage across the Atlantic. His destination was Cowes, but, as the British Channel was alive with vessels-of-war expecting a French invasion, it was found safest to go to London, where Cooper remained for some time. In January, 1807, his ship set out for the Straits of Gibraltar, whence she returned to England in May. Again he passed several weeks in London, and only returned to his native country in the latter part of the year. As these voyages had been long and stormy, Cooper acquired a good deal of sea-knowledge in the course of them. Cooper's commission as a midshipman was dated January 1, 1808; he served for a part of that year on board of the *Vesuvius*, and for another part was employed in building a gun-boat on Lake Ontario, where he encamped during the winter, and learned some of the woodcraft that appears in "The Pathfinder." In 1809 he was left in charge of the gun-boats on Lake Champlain, and later in the year he was with Lawrence in a cruise of the *Wasp*.—ED.

the sea,\* and there yet wanders, among those who are fond of literary anecdote, a story of the young sailor, who, in the streets of one of the English ports, attracted the curiosity of the crowd by explaining to his companions a Latin motto in some public place. That during this period he made himself master of the knowledge and the imagery which he afterward employed to so much advantage in his romances of the sea, the finest ever written, is a common and obvious remark; but it has not been, so far as I know, observed that from the discipline of a seaman's life he may have derived much of his readiness and fertility of invention, much of his skill in surrounding the personages of his novels with imaginary perils, and rescuing them by probable expedients. Of all pursuits, the life of a sailor is that which familiarizes men to danger in its most fearful shapes, most cultivates presence of mind, and most effectually calls forth the resources of a prompt and fearless dexterity by which imminent evil is avoided.

In 1811, Cooper, having resigned his post as midshipman, began the year by marrying Miss De Lancey, sister of the present bishop of the diocese of Western New York, and entered upon a domestic life happily passed to its close. He went to live at Mamaroneck, in the county of Westchester, and while here he wrote and published the first of his novels, entitled "Precaution." Concerning the occasion of writing this work, it is related that once, as he was reading an English novel to Mrs. Cooper, who has, within a short time past, been laid in the grave beside her illustrious husband, and of whom we may now say that her goodness was no less eminent than his genius, he suddenly laid down the book, and said: "I believe I could write a better myself." Almost immediately he composed a chapter of a projected work of fiction, and read it to the same friendly judge, who encouraged him to finish it, and, when it was completed, suggested its publication. Of this he had at the time no intention, but he was at length in-

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\* It was less than five years.—ED.

duced to submit the manuscript to the examination of the late Charles Wilkes, of this city, in whose literary opinions he had great confidence. Mr. Wilkes advised that it should be published, and to these circumstances we owe it that Cooper became an author.

I confess I have merely dipped into this work. The experiment was made with the first edition, deformed by a strange punctuation—a profusion of commas and other pauses, which puzzled and repelled me. Its author, many years afterward, revised and republished it, correcting this fault, and some faults of style also, so that, on a casual inspection, it appeared almost another work.\* It was a professed delineation of English manners, though the author had then seen nothing of English society. It had, however, the honor of being adopted by the country whose manners it described, and, being early republished in Great Britain, passed from the first for an English novel. I am not unwilling to believe what is said of it, that it contained a promise of the powers which its author afterward put forth.

Thirty years ago, in the year 1821, and in the thirty-second of his life, Cooper published the first of the works by which he will be known to posterity, “The Spy.” It took the reading world by a kind of surprise; its merit was acknowledged by a rapid sale; the public read with eagerness and the critics wondered. Many withheld their commendations on account of defects in the plot or blemishes in the composition, arising from want of practice, and some waited till they could hear the judgment of European readers. Yet there were not wanting critics in this country, of whose good opinion any author in any part of the world might be proud, who spoke of it in

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\* Of this passage Professor Lounsbury says: “As a matter of fact, the changes made hardly extended beyond the correction of some points of punctuation and of some grammatical forms; it was in a few instances only that the construction of the sentences underwent transformation.” Mr. Bryant spoke, no doubt, from a slight and rapid inspection of the first edition, with Cooper’s own positive assertions, in his Preface, dwelling on his memory.—ED.



terms it deserved. "Are you not delighted," wrote a literary friend to me, who has since risen to high distinction as a writer, both in verse and in prose, "are you not delighted with 'The Spy' as a work of infinite spirit and genius?" In that word genius lay the explanation of the hold which the work had taken on the minds of men. What it had of excellence was peculiar and unborrowed; its pictures of life, whether in repose or activity, were drawn, with broad lights and shadows, immediately from living originals in nature or in his own imagination. To him, whatever he described was true; it was made a reality to him by the strength with which he conceived it. His power in the delineation of character was shown in the principal personage of his story, Harvey Birch, on whom, though he has chosen to employ him in the ignoble office of a spy, and endowed him with the qualities necessary to his profession—extreme circumspection, fertility in stratagem, and the art of concealing his real character—qualities which, in conjunction with selfishness and greediness, make the scoundrel, he has bestowed the virtues of generosity, magnanimity, an intense love of country, a fidelity not to be corrupted, and a disinterestedness beyond temptation. Out of this combination of qualities he has wrought a character which is a favorite in all nations and with all classes of mankind.

It is said that, if you cast a pebble into the ocean at the mouth of our harbor, the vibration made in the water passes gradually on till it strikes the icy barriers of the deep at the South Pole. The spread of Cooper's reputation is not confined within narrower limits. "The Spy" is read in all the written dialects of Europe, and in some of those of Asia. The French, immediately after its first appearance, gave it to the multitudes who read their far-diffused language, and placed it among the first works of its class. It was rendered into Castilian, and passed into the hands of those who dwell under the beams of the Southern Cross. At length it crossed the eastern frontier of Europe, and the latest record I have seen of

its progress toward absolute universality is contained in a statement of the "International Magazine," derived, I presume, from its author, that in 1847 it was published in a Persian translation at Ispahan. Before this time, I doubt not, they are reading it in some of the languages of Hindostan, and, if the Chinese ever translated anything, it would be in the hands of the many millions who inhabit the far Cathay.

I have spoken of the hesitation which American critics felt in admitting the merits of "The Spy," on account of crudities in the plot or the composition, some of which, no doubt, really existed.\* An exception must be made in favor of the "Port Folio," which, in a notice written by Mrs. Sarah Hall, mother of the editor of that periodical, and author of "Conversations on the Bible," gave the work a cordial welcome; and Cooper, as I am informed, never forgot this act of timely and ready kindness.

It was, perhaps, favorable to the immediate success of "The Spy" that Cooper had few American authors to divide with him the public attention. That crowd of clever men and women who now write for the magazines, who send out volumes of essays, sketches, and poems, and who supply the press with novels, biographies, and historical works, were then, for the most part, either stammering their lessons in the schools, or yet unborn. Yet it is worthy of note that, about the time that "The Spy" made its appearance, the dawn of what we now call our literature was just breaking. The concluding number of Dana's "Idle Man," a work neglected at first, but now numbered among the best

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\* Of the timidity and dependence of our native criticism, Mr. Bryant wrote in 1825 as follows: "The great difficulty with us is, we are afraid of committing ourselves. We do not like to praise a thing till we see the seal of transatlantic approbation upon it. We are like those singers at a church who do very well while sustained by a few skilful and powerful voices, but feel excessively awkward at being obliged to sing alone. We are greatly distressed, and are apt to be wonderfully feeble and faint in our applauses, when we are obliged to utter them without the chorus of the British *litterati* to keep us in countenance." ("New York Review," vol. ii, p. 251.)—ED.

things of the kind in our language, was issued in the same month. The "Sketch Book" was then just completed; the world was admiring it, and its author was meditating "Bracebridge Hall." Miss Sedgwick, about the same time, made her first essay in that charming series of novels of domestic life in New England, which have gained her so high a reputation. Percival, now unhappily silent, had just put to press a volume of poems. I have a copy of an edition of Halleck's "Fanny," published in the same year; the poem of "Yamoyden," by Eastburn and Sands, appeared almost simultaneously with it. Livingston was putting the finishing hand to his "Report on the Penal Code of Louisiana," a work written with such grave, persuasive eloquence, that it belongs as much to our literature as to our jurisprudence. Other contemporaneous American works there were, now less read. Paul Allen's poem of "Noah" was just laid on the counters of the booksellers. Arden published, at the same time, in this city, a translation of Ovid's "Tristia," in heroic verse, in which the complaints of the effeminate Roman poet were rendered with great fidelity to the original, and sometimes not without beauty. If I may speak of myself, it was in that year that I timidly intrusted to the winds and waves of public opinion a small cargo of my own—a poem entitled "The Ages," and half a dozen shorter ones, in a thin duodecimo volume, printed at Cambridge.

We had, at the same time, works of elegant literature, fresh from the press of Great Britain, which are still read and admired. Barry Cornwall, then a young suitor for fame, published in the same year his "Marcia Colonna"; Byron, in the full strength and fertility of his genius, gave the readers of English his tragedy of "Marino Faliero," and was in the midst of his spirited controversy with Bowles concerning the poetry of Pope. "The Spy" had to sustain a comparison with Scott's "Antiquary," published simultaneously with it, and with Lockhart's "Valerius," which seems to me one of the most remarkable works of fiction ever composed.

In 1823, and in his thirty-fourth year, Cooper brought out his novel of "The Pioneers," the scene of which was laid on the borders of his own beautiful lake. In a recent survey of Mr. Cooper's works, by one of his admirers, it is intimated that the reputation of this work may have been in some degree factitious. I cannot think so; I cannot see how such a work could fail of becoming, sooner or later, a favorite. It was several years after its first appearance that I read "The Pioneers," and I read it with delighted astonishment. Here, said I to myself, is the poet of rural life in this country—our Hesiod, our Theocritus, except that he writes without the restraint of numbers, and is a greater poet than they. In "The Pioneers," as in a moving picture, are made to pass before us the hardy occupations and spirited amusements of a prosperous settlement, in a fertile region, encompassed for leagues around with the primeval wilderness of woods. The seasons in their different aspects, bringing with them their different employments: forests falling before the axe; the cheerful population, with the first mild day of spring, engaged in the sugar orchards; the chase of the deer through the deep woods, and into the lake; turkey-shooting, during the Christmas holidays, in which the Indian marksman vied for the prize of skill with the white man; swift sleigh-rides under the bright winter sun, and perilous encounters with wild animals in the forests—these and other scenes of rural life, drawn, as Cooper knew how to draw them, in the bright and healthful coloring of which he was master, are interwoven with a regular narrative of human fortunes, not unskillfully constructed; and how could such a work be otherwise than popular?

In "The Pioneers," Leatherstocking is first introduced—a philosopher of the woods, ignorant of books, but instructed in all that nature, without the aid of science, could reveal to the man of quick senses and inquiring intellect, whose life has been passed under the open sky, and in companionship with a race whose animal perceptions are the acutest and most cultivated of which there is any example. But Leatherstocking has



higher qualities; in him there is a genial blending of the gentlest virtues of the civilized man with the better nature of the aboriginal tribes; all that in them is noble, generous, and ideal is adopted into his own kindly character, and all that is evil is rejected. But why should I attempt to analyze a character so familiar? Leatherstocking is acknowledged, on all hands, to be one of the noblest, as well as most striking and original, creations of fiction. In some of his subsequent novels, Cooper—for he had not yet attained to the full maturity of his powers—heightedened and ennobled his first conception of the character, but in “*The Pioneers*” it dazzled the world with the splendor of novelty.

His next work was “*The Pilot*,”\* in which he showed how, from the vicissitudes of a life at sea, its perils and escapes, from the beauty and terrors of the great deep, from the working of a vessel on a long voyage, and from the frank, brave, and generous, but peculiar character of the seamen, may be drawn materials of romance by which the minds of men may be as deeply moved as by anything in

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\* Of the origin of “*The Pilot*”—the great model and inspirer of the sea story—Professor Lounsbury gave this agreeable account, condensed from one of the later Prefaces: “At a dinner party in New York, in 1822, at which Cooper was present, the authorship of the *Waverley* novels came up for discussion. In December of the preceding year ‘*The Pirate*’ had been published. The incidents of this story were brought forward as a proof of the thorough familiarity with sea life of him, whoever he was, that had written it. Such familiarity Scott had never had the opportunity to gain in the only way it could be gained. It follows, therefore, that this tale was not of his composition. Cooper, who had never doubted the authorship of these novels, did not at all share in this view. The very reasons that made others feel uncertain led him to be confident. To one like him, whose early life had been spent on top-gallant yards, and in becketing royals, it was perfectly clear that ‘*The Pirate*’ was the work of a landsman, and not of a sailor. Not that he denied the accuracy of the descriptions as far as they went: the point that he made was that, with the same materials, far greater effects could and would have been produced had the author possessed that intimate familiarity with ocean life which can be had alone by one whose home for years has been upon the waves. He could not convince his opponents by argument; he consequently determined to convince them by writing a sea story.”—ED.

the power of romance to present. In this walk, Cooper has had many disciples, but no rival. All who have since written romances of the sea have been but travellers in a country of which he was the great discoverer; and none of them all seemed to have loved a ship as Cooper loved it, or have been able so strongly to interest all classes of readers in its fortunes. Among other personages drawn with great strength in "The Pilot" is the general favorite, Tom Coffin, the thorough seaman, with all the virtues, and one or two of the infirmities, of his profession, superstitious, as seamen are apt to be, yet whose superstitions strike us as but an irregular growth of his devout recognition of the Power who holds the ocean in the hollow of his hand; true-hearted, gentle, full of resources, collected in danger, and at last calmly perishing at the post of duty, with the vessel he has long guided, by what I may call a great and magnanimous death. His rougher and coarser companion, Boltrope, is drawn with scarcely less skill, and with a no less vigorous hand.

"The Pioneers" is not Cooper's best tale of the American forest, nor "The Pilot," perhaps, in all respects, his best tale of the sea; yet, if he had ceased to write here, the measure of his fame would possibly have been scarcely less ample than it now is. Neither of them is far below the best of his productions, and in them appear the two most remarkable creations of his imagination—two of the most remarkable characters in all fiction.

It was about this time that my acquaintance with Cooper began—an acquaintance of more than a quarter of a century, in which his deportment toward me was that of unvaried kindness. He then resided a considerable part of the year in this city, and here he had founded a weekly club, to which many of the most distinguished men of the place belonged. Of the members who have since passed away were Chancellor Kent, the jurist; Wiley, the intelligent and liberal bookseller; Henry D. Sedgwick, always active in schemes of benevo-

lence; Jarvis, the painter, a man of infinite humor, whose jests awoke inextinguishable laughter; De Kay, the naturalist; Sands, the poet; Jacob Harvey, whose genial memory is cherished by many friends. Of those who are yet living was Morse, the inventor of the electric telegraph; Durand, then one of the first engravers, and now no less illustrious as a painter; Henry James Anderson, whose acquirements might awaken the envy of the ripest scholars of the old world; Halleck, the poet and wit; Verplanck, who has given the world the best edition of Shakespeare for general readers; Dr. King, now at the head of Columbia College, and his two immediate predecessors in that office. I might enlarge the list with many other names of no less distinction. The army and navy contributed their proportion of members, whose names are on record in our national history. Cooper, when in town, was always present, and I remember being struck with the inexhaustible vivacity of his conversation, and the minuteness of his knowledge, in everything which depended upon acuteness of observation and exactness of recollection. I remember, too, being somewhat startled, coming as I did from the seclusion of a country life, by a certain emphatic frankness in his manner, which, however, I came at last to like and to admire. The club met in the hotel called Washington Hall, the site of which is now occupied by part of the circuit of Stewart's marble building.

"Lionel Lincoln," which cannot be ranked among the successful productions of Cooper, was published in 1825; and in the year following appeared the "Last of the Mohicans," which more than recovered the ground lost by its predecessor. In this work, the construction of the narrative has signal defects, but it is one of the triumphs of the author's genius that he makes us unconscious of them while we read. It is only when we have had time to awake from the intense interest in which he has held us by the vivid reality of his narrative, and have begun to search for faults in cold blood, that we are able to find them. In the "Last of

the Mohicans" we have a bolder portraiture of Leatherstocking than in "The Pioneers."

This work was published in 1826, and in the same year Cooper sailed with his family for Europe. He left New York as one of the vessels-of-war, described in his romances of the sea, goes out of port, amid the thunder of a parting salute from the big guns on the batteries. A dinner was given him just before his departure, attended by most of the distinguished men of the city, at which Peter A. Jay presided, and Dr. King addressed him in terms which some then thought too glowing, but which would now seem sufficiently temperate, expressing the good wishes of his friends, and dwelling on the satisfaction they promised themselves in possessing so illustrious a representative of American literature in the Old World. Cooper had scarcely arrived in France when he remembered his friends of the weekly club, and sent frequent missives to be read at its meetings; but the club missed its founder, went into a decline, and not long afterward quietly expired.

The first of Cooper's novels published after leaving America was "The Prairie," which appeared early in 1827, a work with the admirers of which I wholly agree. I read it with a certain awe, an undefined sense of sublimity, such as one experiences on entering for the first time upon those immense grassy deserts from which the work takes its name. The squatter and his family—that brawny old man and his large-limbed sons, living in a sort of primitive and patriarchal barbarism, sluggish on ordinary occasions, but terrible when roused, like the hurricane that sweeps the grand but monotonous wilderness in which they dwell—seem a natural growth of the ancient fields of the West. Leatherstocking, a hunter in "The Pioneers," a warrior in the "Last of the Mohicans," and now in his extreme old age, a trapper on the prairie, declined in strength, but undecayed in intellect, and looking to the near close of his life and a grave under the long grass as calmly as the laborer at sunset looks to his



evening slumber, is no less in harmony with the silent desert in which he wanders.\* Equally so are the Indians, still his companions, copies of the American savage somewhat idealized, but not the less a part of the wild nature in which they have their haunts.

Before the year closed, Cooper had given the world another nautical tale, the "Red Rover," which with many is a greater favorite than "The Pilot," and with reason, perhaps, if we consider principally the incidents, which are conducted and described with a greater mastery over the springs of pity and terror.

It happened to Cooper while he was abroad, as it not unfrequently happens to our countrymen, to hear the United States disadvantageously compared with Europe. He had himself been a close observer of things both here and in the Old World, and was conscious of being able to refute the detractors of his country in regard to many points. He published, in 1828, after he had been two years in Europe, a series of letters, entitled "Notions of the Americans by a Travelling Bachelor," in which he gave a favorable account of the working of our institutions, and vindicated his country from various flippant and ill-natured misrepresentations of foreigners. It is rather too measured in style, but is written from a mind full of the subject, and from a memory wonderfully stored with particulars. Although twenty-four years have elapsed since its publication, but little of the vindication has become obsolete.

Cooper loved his country and was proud of her history and her institutions, but it puzzles many that he should have appeared at different times as her eulogist and her censor. My

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\* Mr. Thackeray's *adsum*, in his description of the death of Colonel Newcome, has been very much admired; but it seems to have been borrowed from the death of the old trapper in "The Prairie," "when for a moment he looked about him, as if he invited all in his presence to listen (the lingering remnant of human frailty), and then, with a fine military elevation of the head, and a voice that might be heard in every part of that numerous assembly, he pronounced the word 'HERE.'"—ED.

friends, she is worthy both of praise and of blame, and Cooper was not the man to shrink from bestowing either at what seemed to him the proper time. He defended her from detractors abroad; he sought to save her from flatterers at home. I will not say that he was in as good-humor with his country when he wrote "*Home as Found*" as when he wrote his "*Notions of the Americans*," but this I will say, that, whether he commended or censured, he did it in the sincerity of his heart, as a true American, and in the belief that it would do good. His "*Notions of the Americans*" were more likely to lessen than to increase his popularity in Europe, inasmuch as they were put forth without the slightest regard to European prejudices.

In 1829 he brought out the novel entitled the "*Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*," one of the few of his works which we now rarely hear mentioned. He was engaged in the composition of a third nautical tale, which he afterward published under the name of "*The Water-Witch*," when the memorable revolution of the Three Days of July broke out. He saw a government, ruling by fear and in defiance of public opinion, overthrown in a few hours, with little bloodshed; he saw the French nation, far from being intoxicated with their new liberty, peacefully addressing themselves to the discussion of the institutions under which they were to live. A work which Cooper afterward published, his "*Residence in Europe*," gives the outline of a plan of government for France furnished by him at that time to Lafayette, with whom he was in habits of close and daily intimacy. It was his idea to give permanence to the new order of things by associating two strong parties in its support—the friends of legitimacy and the republicans. He suggested that Henry V should be called to the hereditary throne of France, a youth yet to be educated as the head of a free people, that the peerage should be abolished, and a legislature of two chambers established, with a constituency of at least a million and a half of electors; the senate to be chosen by the general vote, as the representative of the en-

tire nation, and the members of the other house to be chosen by districts, as the representatives of the local interests. To the middle ground of politics, so ostentatiously occupied by Louis Philippe at the beginning of his reign, he predicted a brief duration, believing that it would speedily be merged in despotism, or supplanted by the popular rule. His prophecy has been fulfilled more amply than he could have imagined—fulfilled in both its alternatives.

In one of the controversies of that time, Cooper bore a distinguished part. The "*Revue Britannique*," a periodical published in Paris, boldly affirmed the Government of the United States to be one of the most expensive in the world, and its people among the most heavily taxed of mankind. This assertion was supported by a certain show of proof, and the writer affected to have established the conclusion that a republic must necessarily be more expensive than a monarchy. The partisans of the court were delighted with the reasoning of the article, and claimed a triumph over our ancient friend Lafayette, who, during forty years, had not ceased to hold up the Government of the United States as the cheapest in the world. At the suggestion of Lafayette, Cooper replied to this attack upon his country in a letter which was translated into French, and, together with another from General Bertrand, for many years a resident in America, was laid before the people of France.

These two letters provoked a shower of rejoinders, in which, according to Cooper, misstatements were mingled with scurrility. He commenced a series of letters on the question in dispute, which were published in the "*National*," a daily sheet, and gave the first evidence of that extraordinary acuteness in controversy which was no less characteristic of his mind than the vigor of his imagination. The enemies of Lafayette pressed into their service Mr. Leavitt Harris, of New Jersey, afterward our *chargé d'affaires* at the court of France, but Cooper replied to Mr. Harris in the "*National*" of May 2, 1832, closing a discussion in which he had effectually silenced

those who objected to our institutions on the score of economy. Of these letters, which would form an important chapter in political science, no entire copy, I have been told, is to be found in this country.

One of the consequences of earnest controversy is almost invariably personal ill-will. Cooper was told by one who held an official station under the French government, that the part he had taken in this dispute concerning taxation would neither be forgotten nor forgiven. The dislike he had incurred in that quarter was strengthened by his novel of "*The Bravo*," published in the year 1831, while he was in the midst of his quarrel with the aristocratic party. In that work, of which he has himself justly said that it was thoroughly American in all that belonged to it, his object was to show how institutions, professedly created to prevent violence and wrong, become, when perverted from their natural destination, the instruments of injustice; and how, in every system which makes power the exclusive property of the strong, the weak are sure to be oppressed. The work is written with all the vigor and spirit of his best novels; the magnificent city of Venice, in which the scene of the story is laid, stands continually before the imagination; and from time to time the gorgeous ceremonies of the Venetian republic pass under our eyes, such as the marriage of the Doge with the Adriatic, and the contest of the gondolas for the prize of speed. *The Bravo* himself and several of the other characters are strongly conceived and distinguished, but the most remarkable of them all is the spirited and generous-hearted daughter of the jailer.

It has been said by some critics, who judge of Cooper by his failures, that he had no skill in drawing female characters. By the same process it might, I suppose, be shown that Raphael was but an ordinary painter. It must be admitted that, when Cooper drew a lady of high breeding, he was apt to pay too much attention to the formal part of her character, and to make her a mere bundle of cold proprieties. But, when he places his heroines in some situations in life which leaves him



nothing to do but to make them natural and true, I know of nothing finer, nothing more attractive or more individual than the portraitures he has given us.

"Figaro," the wittiest of the French periodicals, and at that time on the liberal side, commended "The Bravo"; the journals on the side of the government censured it. "Figaro" afterward passed into the hands of the aristocratic party, and Cooper became the object of its attacks; he was not, however, a man to be driven from any purpose which he had formed, either by flattery or abuse, and both were tried with equal ill success. In 1832 he published his "Heidenmauer," and in 1833 his "Headsman of Berne," both with a political design similar to that of "The Bravo," though neither of them takes the same high rank among his works.\*

In 1833, after a residence of seven years in different parts of Europe, but mostly in France, Cooper returned to his native country. The welcome which met him here was somewhat chilled by the effect of the attacks made upon him in France; and, remembering with what zeal, and at what sacrifice of the universal acceptance which his works would otherwise have met, he had maintained the cause of his country against the wits and orators of the court party in France, we cannot wonder that he should have felt this coldness as undeserved.† He published, shortly after his arrival in this coun-

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\* Professor Lounsbury thinks "The Headsman" equal in merit to "The Bravo," but he regards the whole series as a mistake in that they were novels written with a purpose. The story was not told for its own sake, but for the sake of enforcing certain political opinions; and the didactic element was not kept subordinate to the purely creative element. "Art," he says finely, "must be wooed as a mistress; she can never be commanded as a slave." No less "The Headsman" is profoundly interesting as a story, and the characters are strongly discriminated.—ED.

† It was worse than coldness—and it was not only undeserved, but outrageously unjust. The accusation was constantly made against him that "he went about flouting his Americanism throughout Europe." "He had, in fact, aroused the hostility of that section of Americans, insignificant in number and ability, but sometimes having social position, who prefer the conveniences of despotism to the inconveniences of liberty. To such men Cooper's intense nationality was a standing reproach. His

try, "A Letter to his Countrymen," in which he complained of the censures cast upon him in the American newspapers, gave a history of the part he had taken in exposing the misstatements of the "*Revue Britannique*," and warned his countrymen against the too common error of resorting, with a blind deference, to foreign authorities, often swayed by national or political prejudices, for our opinions of American authors. Going beyond this topic, he examined and reprehended the habit of applying to the interpretation of our own constitution maxims derived from the practice of other governments, particularly that of Great Britain. The importance of construing that instrument by its own principles he illustrated by considering several points in dispute between parties of the day, on which he gave very decided opinions.

The principal effect of this pamphlet, as it seemed to me, was to awaken in certain quarters a kind of resentment that a successful writer of fiction should presume to give lessons in politics. I meddle not here with the conclusions at which he arrived, though I must be allowed to say that they were stated and argued with great ability. In 1835, Cooper published "*The Monikins*," a satirical work, partly with a political aim; and in the same year appeared "*The American Democrat*," a view of the civil and social relations of the United States, discussing more gravely various topics touched upon in the former work, and pointing out in what respects he deemed the American people in their practice to have fallen short of the excellence of their institutions.

He found time, however, for a more genial task—that of giving to the world his observations on foreign countries. In 1836 appeared his "*Sketches of Switzerland*," a series of letters in four volumes, the second part published about two months after the first, a delightful work, written in a more

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reputation, moreover, made their own littleness especially conspicuous. Depreciation of him, as a man of letters, was a necessity of their case." "For an act of genuine patriotism, for which he deserved the thanks of all his countrymen, he received vilification from many of them." (Lounsbury, p. 115.)—ED.

fluent and flexible style than his "Notions of the Americans." The first part of "Gleanings in Europe," giving an account of his residence in France, followed in the same year; and the second part of the same work, containing his observations on England, was published in April, 1837. In these works, forming a series of eight volumes, he relates and describes with much of the same distinctness as in his novels; and his remarks on the manners and institutions of the different countries, often sagacious, and always peculiarly his own, derive, from their frequent reference to contemporary events, an historical interest.

In 1838 appeared "Homeward Bound" and "Home as Found," two satirical novels, in which Cooper held up to ridicule a certain class of conductors of the newspaper press in America. These works had not the good fortune to become popular.\* Cooper did not, and, because he was too deeply in earnest, perhaps would not, infuse into his satirical works that gayety without which satire becomes wearisome. I believe, however, that if they had been written by anybody else, they would have met with more favor; but the world knew that Cooper was able to give them something better, and would not be satisfied with anything short of his best. Some childishly imagined that, because, in the two works I have just mentioned, a newspaper editor is introduced, in whose character almost every possible vice of his profession is made to find a place, Cooper intended an indiscriminate attack upon the whole body of writers for the newspaper press, forgetting that such a portraiture was a satire only on those to whom it bore a likeness. We have become less sensitive and more reason-

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\* The characters in the two novels are nearly the same; but "Homeward Bound," the scene of which is laid wholly on the water, is greatly the superior of the two. Indeed, Cooper's recent biographer regards it, "in its movement, its variety of incidents, and the spirit and energy with which they are told, as one of the best of Cooper's sea novels." "Home as Found" was a severe criticism of his country and countrymen, arrogant in tone, bitter and foolish in sentiment, crude and uninformed in knowledge, and weak in execution.—ED.

able of late, and the monthly periodicals make sport for their readers of the follies and ignorance of the newspaper editors, without awakening the slightest resentment; but Cooper led the way into this sort of discipline, and I remember some instances of towering indignation at his audacity expressed in the journals of that time.

The next year Cooper made his appearance before the public in a new department of writing; his "Naval History of the United States" was brought out in two octavo volumes, at Philadelphia, by Carey & Lea. In writing his stories of the sea, his attention had been much turned to this subject, and his mind filled with striking incidents from expeditions and battles in which our naval commanders had been engaged. This made his task the lighter; but he gathered his materials with great industry, and with a conscientious attention to exactness, for he was not a man to take a fact for granted, or allow imagination to usurp the place of inquiry. He digested our naval annals into a narrative, written with spirit it is true, but with that air of sincere dealing which the reader willingly takes as a pledge of its authenticity.

An abridgment of the work was afterward prepared and published by the author. The "Edinburgh Review," in an article professing to examine the statements both of Cooper's work and of "The History of the English Navy," written by Mr. James, a surgeon by profession,\* made a violent attack upon the American historian. Unfortunately, it took James's narrative as its sole guide, and followed it implicitly. Cooper replied in the "Democratic Review" for January, 1840, and, by a masterly analysis of his statements, convicting James of self-contradiction in almost every particular in which he differed from himself, refuted both James and the reviewer. It was a refutation which admitted of no rejoinder.†

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\* A veterinary surgeon, or, as Cooper called him, a horse-doctor.—ED.

† Mr. Bryant omits here all reference to a bitter contest in which Cooper was involved with his fellow-townsmen of Cooperstown in regard to the possession of a point of land on Otsego Lake, which came to him from his father's estate, but



Scarce anything in Cooper's life was so remarkable, or so strikingly illustrated his character, as his contest with the newspaper press. He engaged in it after provocations, many and long endured, and prosecuted it through years with great energy, perseverance, and practical dexterity, till he was left master of the field. In what I am about to say of it, I hope I shall not give offence to any one, as I shall speak without the slightest malevolence toward those with whom he waged this controversy. Over some of them, as over their renowned adversary, the grave has now closed. Yet where shall the truth be spoken, if not beside the grave?

I have already alluded to the principal causes which provoked the newspaper attacks upon Cooper. If he had never meddled with questions of government on either side of the Atlantic, and never satirized the newspaper press, I have little doubt that he would have been spared these attacks. I cannot, however, ascribe them all, or even the greater part of them, to personal malignity. One journal followed the example of another, with little reflection, I think, in most cases, till it became a sort of fashion, not merely to decry his works but to arraign his motives.

It is related that, in 1832, while he was at Paris, an article was shown him in an American newspaper, purporting to be a criticism on one of his works, but reflecting with much asperity on his personal character. "I care nothing," he is reported to have said, "for the criticism, but I am not indifferent to the slander. If these attacks on my character should be kept up five years after my return to America, I shall resort to the New York courts for protection." He gave the newspaper

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which the inhabitants claimed, because they had been allowed the free use of it for some years. It grew into a most impassioned controversy, but of no longer any interest to us, save as it illustrates the determined character of the novelist, and as it gave occasion for the newspaper attacks of which Mr. Bryant goes on to speak. Professor Lounsbury gives a full, and, it would seem, an impartial account of this furious local squabble ("Life," p. 142 *et seq.*), but he does not tell how, since the death of the author, these local animosities have subsided, and his name is now held in the profoundest admiration.—ED.

press of this State the full period of forbearance on which he had fixed, but, finding that forbearance seemed to encourage assault, he sought redress in the courts of law.

When these litigations were first begun, I recollect it seemed to me that Cooper had taken a step which would give him a great deal of trouble, and effect but little good. I said to myself—

“Alas ! Leviathan is not so tamed !”

As he proceeded, however, I saw that he had understood the matter better than I. He put a hook into the nose of this huge monster, wallowing in his inky pool, and bespattering the passers-by: he dragged him to the land and made him tractable. One suit followed another; one editor was sued, I think, half a dozen times; some of them found themselves under a second indictment before the first was tried. In vindicating himself to his reader against the charge of publishing one libel, the angry journalist often floundered into another. The occasions of these prosecutions seem to have been always carefully considered, for Cooper was almost uniformly successful in obtaining verdicts. In a letter of his, written in February, 1843, about five years, I think, from the commencement of the first prosecutions, he says: “I have beaten every man I have sued, who has not retracted his libels.”

In one of these suits, commenced against the late William L. Stone, of the “Commercial Advertiser,” and referred to the arbitration of three distinguished lawyers, he argued himself the question of the authenticity of his account of the battle of Lake Erie, which was the matter in dispute. I listened to his opening; it was clear, skilful, and persuasive, but his closing argument was said to be splendidly eloquent. “I have heard nothing like it,” said a barrister to me, “since the days of Emmet.”

Cooper behaved liberally toward his antagonists, so far as pecuniary damages were concerned, though some of them wholly escaped their payment by bankruptcy. After, I be-

lieve, about six years of litigation, the newspaper press gradually subsided into a pacific disposition toward its adversary, and the contest closed with the account of pecuniary profit and loss, so far as he was concerned, nearly balanced. The occasion of these suits was far from honorable to those who provoked them, but the result was, I had almost said, creditable to all parties; to him, as the courageous prosecutor, to the administration of justice in this country, and to the docility of the newspaper press, which he had disciplined into good manners.

It was while he was in the midst of these litigations that he published, in 1840, "*The Pathfinder*." People had begun to think of him as a controversialist, acute, keen, and persevering, occupied with his personal wrongs and schemes of attack and defence. They were startled from this estimate of his character by the moral beauty of that glorious work—I must so call it; by the vividness and force of its delineations, by the unspoiled love of nature apparent in every page, and by the fresh and warm emotions which everywhere gave life to the narrative and the dialogue. Cooper was now in his fifty-first year, but nothing which he had produced in the earlier part of his literary life was written with so much of what might seem the generous fervor of youth, or showed the faculty of invention in higher vigor. I recollect that near the time of its appearance I was informed of an observation made upon it by one highly distinguished in the literature of our country and of the age, between whom and the author an unhappy coolness had for some years existed. As he finished the reading of "*The Pathfinder*" he exclaimed: "They may say what they will of Cooper; the man who wrote this book is not only a great man, but a good man."

The readers of "*The Pathfinder*" were quickly reconciled to the fourth appearance of *Leatherstocking*, when they saw him made to act a different part from any which the author had hitherto assigned him—when they saw him shown as a

lover, and placed in the midst of associations which invested his character with a higher and more affecting heroism. In this work are two female characters, portrayed in a masterly manner—the corporal's daughter, Mabel Dunham, generous, resolute, yet womanly, and the young Indian woman, called by her tribe the Dew of June, a personification of female truth, affection, and sympathy, with a strong aboriginal cast, yet a product of nature as bright and pure as that from which she is named.

"Mercedes of Castile," published near the close of the same year, has none of the stronger characteristics of Cooper's genius; but in "The Deerslayer," which appeared in 1841, another of his Leatherstocking tales, he gave us a work rivaling "The Pathfinder." Leatherstocking is brought before us in his early youth, in the first exercise of that keen sagacity which is blended so harmoniously with a simple and ingenuous goodness. The two daughters of the retired freebooter dwelling on the Otsego Lake inspire scarcely less interest than the principal personage; Judith, in the pride of her beauty and intellect, her good impulses contending with a fatal love of admiration, holding us fascinated with a constant interest in her fate, which, with consummate skill, we are permitted rather to conjecture than to know; and Hetty, scarcely less beautiful in person, weak-minded, but wise in the midst of that weakness beyond the wisdom of the loftiest intellect, through the power of conscience and religion. The character of Hetty would have been a hazardous experiment in feebler hands, but in his it was admirably successful.

"The Two Admirals" and "Wing-and-Wing" were given to the public in 1842, both of them taking a high rank among Cooper's sea tales. The first of these is a sort of naval epic in prose: the flight and chase of armed vessels hold us in breathless suspense; the sea fights are described with a terrible power. In the later sea tales of Cooper, it seems to me that the mastery with which he makes his grand processions of events pass before the mind's eye is even greater



than in his earlier. The next year he published the "Wyandotte, or Hutted Knoll," one of his beautiful romances of the woods, and in 1844 two more of his sea stories, "Afloat and Ashore," and "Miles Wallingford," its sequel. The long series of his nautical tales was closed by "Jack Tier, or the Florida Reef," published in 1848, when Cooper was in his sixtieth year, and it is as full of spirit, energy, invention, life-like presentation of objects and events—

The vision and the faculty divine—

as anything he has written.

Let me pause here to say that Cooper, though not a manufacturer of verse, was, in the highest sense of the word, a poet; his imagination wrought nobly and grandly, and imposed its creations on the mind of the reader for realities. With him there was no withering, or decline, or disuse of the poetic faculty: as he stepped downward from the zenith of life, no shadow or chill came over it; it was like the year of some genial climates—a perpetual season of verdure, bloom, and fruitfulness. As these works came out, I was rejoiced to see that he was unspoiled by the controversies in which he had allowed himself to become engaged; that they had not given, to these better expressions of his genius, any tinge of misanthropy, or appearance of contracting and closing sympathies, any trace of an interest in his fellow-beings less large and free than in his earlier works.

Before the appearance of his "Jack Tier," Cooper published, in 1845 and the following year, a series of novels relating to the Anti-rent question, in which he took great interest. He thought that the disposition manifested in certain quarters to make concessions to what he deemed a denial of the rights of property was a first step in a most dangerous path. To discourage this disposition, he wrote "Satanstoe," "The Chain-Bearer," and "The Red-Skins."\* They are didac-

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\* The biographer, whom I have frequently cited, denies that "Satanstoe" is a political novel (save in the Preface), and ranks it among the very best of Cooper's

tic in their design, and want the freedom of invention which belongs to Cooper's best novels; but, if they had been written by anybody but Cooper—by a member of Congress, for example, or an eminent politician of any class—they would have made his reputation. It was said, I am told, by a distinguished jurist of our State, that they entitled the author to as high a place in law as his other works had won for him in literature.

I had thought, in meditating the plan of this discourse, to mention all the works of Mr. Cooper, but the length to which I have found it extending has induced me to pass over several written in the last ten years of his life, and to confine myself to those which best illustrate his literary character. The last of his novels was the "Ways of the Hour," a work in which the objections he entertained to the trial by jury in civil causes were stated in the form of a narrative.

It is a voluminous catalogue—that of Cooper's published works—but it comprises not all he wrote.\* He committed to the fire, without remorse, many of the fruits of his literary industry. It was understood, some years since, that he had a work ready for the press on the "Middle States of the Union," principally illustrative of their social history; but it has not been found among his manuscripts, and the presumption is that he must have destroyed it. He had planned a work on the "Towns of Manhattan," for the publication of which he made arrangements with Mr. Putnam, of this city, and a part of which, already written, was in press at the time of his death. The printed part has since been destroyed by fire, but a portion of the manuscript was recovered. The work, I learn, will be completed by one of the family, who, within a

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stories. "It is a picture of colonial life and manners during the middle of the eighteenth century, such as can be found drawn nowhere else so truthfully and so vividly." But Cooper was now so unpopular that his books were scarcely mentioned in the journals unless it was to be sneered at and abused.—ED.

\* Professor Lounsbury gives over seventy titles in his bibliography, Appendix, p. 290.—ED.

few years past, has earned an honorable name among the authors of our country. Great as was the number of his works, and great as was the favor with which they were received, the pecuniary rewards of his success were far less than has been generally supposed—scarcely, as I am informed, a tenth part of what common rumor made them. His fame was infinitely the largest acknowledgment which this most successful of American authors received for his labors.

The “*Ways of the Hour*” appeared in 1850. At this time his personal appearance was remarkable. He seemed in perfect health, and in the highest energy and activity of his faculties. I have scarcely seen any man at that period of life on whom his years sat more lightly. His conversation had lost none of its liveliness, though it seemed somewhat more genial and forbearing in tone, and his spirits none of their elasticity. He was contemplating, I have since been told, another Leatherstocking tale, deeming that he had not yet exhausted the character; and those who consider what new resources it yielded him in “*The Pathfinder*” and “*The Deerslayer*,” will readily conclude that he was not mistaken.

The disease, however, by which he was removed, was even then impending over him, and not long afterward his friends here were grieved to learn that his health was declining. He came to New York so changed that they looked at him with sorrow, and after a stay of some weeks, partly for the benefit of medical advice, returned to Cooperstown, to leave it no more. His complaint gradually gained strength, subdued a constitution originally robust, and finally passed into a confirmed dropsy. In August, 1851, he was visited by his excellent and learned friend, Dr. Francis, a member of the weekly club which he had founded in the early part of his literary career. He found him bearing the sufferings of his disease with manly firmness, gave him such medical counsels as the malady appeared to require, prepared him delicately for its fatal termination, and returned to New York with the most melancholy anticipations. In a few days afterward, Cooper

expired, amid the deep affliction of his family, on the 14th of September, the day before that on which he would have completed his sixty-second year. He died, apparently without pain, in peace and religious hope. The relations of man to his Maker, and to that state of being for which the present is but a preparation, had occupied much of his thoughts during his whole lifetime, and he crossed, with a serene composure, the mysterious boundary which divides this life from the next.

The departure of such a man, in the full strength of his faculties—on whom the country had for thirty years looked as one of the permanent ornaments of its literature, and whose name had been so often associated with praise, with renown, with controversy, with blame, but never with death—diffused a universal awe. It was as if an earthquake had shaken the ground on which we stood, and showed the grave opening by our path. In the general grief for his loss, his virtues only were remembered, and his failings forgotten.

Of his failings I have said little: such as he had were obvious to all the world; they lay on the surface of his character; those who knew him least made the most account of them. With a character so made up of positive qualities—a character so independent and uncompromising, and with a sensitiveness far more acute than he was willing to acknowledge—it is not surprising that occasions frequently arose to bring him sometimes into friendly collision, and sometimes into graver disagreements and misunderstandings with his fellow-men. For his infirmities, his friends found an ample counterpoise in the generous sincerity of his nature. He never thought of disguising his opinions, and he abhorred all disguise in others; he did not even deign to use that show of regard toward those of whom he did not think well, which the world tolerates, and almost demands. A manly expression of opinion, however different from his own, commanded his respect. Of his own works, he spoke with the same freedom as of the works of others, and never hesitated to express his judgment of a book for the reason that it was written by



himself; yet he could bear with gentleness any dissent from the estimate he placed on his own writings. His character was like the bark of the cinnamon—a rough and astringent rind without, and an intense sweetness within. Those who penetrated below the surface found a genial temper, warm affections, and a heart with ample place for his friends, their pursuits, their good name, their welfare. They found him a philanthropist, though not precisely after the fashion of the day; a religious man, most devout where devotion is most apt to be a feeling rather than a custom, in the household circle; hospitable, and to the extent of his means liberal-handed in acts of charity. They found also that, though in general he would as soon have thought of giving up an old friend as of giving up an opinion, he was not proof against testimony, and could part with a mistaken opinion as one parts with an old friend who has been proved faithless and unworthy. In short, Cooper was one of those who, to be loved, must be intimately known.

Of his literary character I have spoken largely in the narrative of his life, but there are yet one or two remarks which must be made to do it justice. In that way of writing in which he excelled, it seems to me that he united, in a pre-eminent degree, those qualities which enabled him to interest the largest number of readers. He wrote not for the fastidious, the over-refined, the morbidly delicate; for these find in his genius something too robust for their liking—something by which their sensibilities are too rudely shaken; but he wrote for mankind at large—for men and women in the ordinary healthful state of feeling—and in their admiration he found his reward. It is for this class that public libraries are obliged to provide themselves with an extraordinary number of copies of his works: the number in the Mercantile Library in this city, I am told, is forty. Hence it is that he has earned a fame wider, I think, than any author of modern times—wider, certainly, than any author of any age ever enjoyed in his lifetime. All his excellences are translatable—they pass

readily into languages the least allied in their genius to that in which he wrote, and in them he touches the heart and kindles the imagination with the same power as in the original English.

Cooper was not wholly without humor; it is sometimes found lurking in the dialogue of Harvey Birch and of Leatherstocking; but it forms no considerable element in his works; and, if it did, it would have stood in the way of his universal popularity, since, of all qualities, it is the most difficult to transfuse into a foreign language. Nor did the effect he produced upon the reader depend on any grace of style which would escape a translator of ordinary skill. With his style, it is true, he took great pains, and in his earlier works, I am told, sometimes altered the proofs sent from the printer so largely that they might be said to be written over. Yet he attained no special felicity, variety, or compass of expression. His style, however, answered his purpose; it has defects, but it is manly and clear, and stamps on the mind of the reader the impression he intended to convey. I am not sure that some of the very defects of Cooper's novels do not add, by a certain force of contrast, to their power over the mind. He is long in getting at the interest of his narrative. The progress of the plot, at first, is like that of one of his own vessels of war, slowly, heavily, and even awkwardly working out of a harbor. We are impatient and weary, but when the vessel is once in the open sea, and feels the free breath of heaven in her full sheets, our delight and admiration are all the greater at the grace, the majesty, and power with which she divides and bears down the waves, and pursues her course at will over the great waste of waters.

Such are the works so widely read and so universally admired in all the zones of the globe, and by men of every kindred and every tongue—works which have made of those who dwell in remote latitudes wanderers in our forests and observers of our manners, and have inspired them with an interest in our history. A gentleman who had returned from

Europe just before the death of Cooper was asked what he found the people of the Continent doing. "They all are reading Cooper," he answered; "in the little kingdom of Holland, with its three millions of inhabitants, I looked into four different translations of Cooper in the language of the country." A traveller, who has seen much of the middle classes of Italy, lately said to me: "I found that all they knew of America, and that was not little, they had learned from Cooper's novels; from him they had learned the story of American liberty, and through him they had been introduced to our Washington; they had read his works till the shores of the Hudson, and the valleys of Westchester, and the banks of Otsego Lake, had become to them familiar ground."

Over all the countries into whose speech this great man's works have been rendered by the labors of their scholars, the sorrow of that loss which we deplore is now diffusing itself. Here we lament the ornament of our country, there they mourn the death of him who delighted the human race. Even now, while I speak, the pulse of grief which is passing through the nations has haply just reached some remote neighborhood; the news of his death has been brought to some dwelling on the slopes of the Andes or amid the snowy wastes of the North, and the dark-eyed damsel of Chili or the fair-haired maid of Norway is sad to think that he, whose stories of heroism and true love have so often kept her for hours from her pillow, lives no more.

He is gone! but the creations of his genius, fixed in living words, survive the frail material organs by which the words were first traced. They partake of a middle nature between the deathless mind and the decaying body, of which they are the common offspring, and are, therefore, destined to a duration, if not eternal, yet indefinite. The examples he has given in his fictions, of heroism, honor, and truth, of large sympathies between man and man, of all that is good, great, and excellent, embodied in personages marked with so strong an individuality that we place them among our friends and favor-

ites; his frank and generous men, his gentle and noble women, shall live through centuries to come, and only perish with our language. I have said with our language; but who shall say when it may be the fate of the English language to be numbered with the extinct forms of human speech? Who shall declare which of the present tongues of the civilized world will survive its fellows? It may be that some one of them, more fortunate than the rest, will long outlast them, in some undisturbed quarter of the globe, and in the midst of a new civilization. The creations of Cooper's genius, even now transferred to that language, may remain to be the delight of the nations through another great cycle of centuries, beginning after the English language and its contemporaneous form of civilization shall have passed away.



## WASHINGTON IRVING.\*

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WE have come together, my friends, on the birthday of an illustrious citizen of our republic, but so recent is his departure from among us that our assembling is rather an expression of sorrow for his death than of congratulation that such a man was born into the world. His admirable writings, the beautiful products of his peculiar genius, remain to be the enjoyment of the present and future generations. We keep the recollection of his amiable and blameless life and his kindly manners, and for these we give thanks; but the thought will force itself upon us that the light of his friendly eye is quenched, that we must no more hear his beloved voice, nor take his welcome hand. It is as if some genial year had just closed and left us in frost and gloom; its flowery spring, its leafy summer, its plenteous autumn, flown, never to return. Its gifts are strewn around us; its harvests are in our garner; but its season of bloom and warmth and fruitfulness is past. We look around us and see that the sunshine, which filled the golden ear and tinged the reddening apple, brightens the earth no more.

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\* A Discourse on his Life, Character, and Genius, delivered before the New York Historical Society, at the Academy of Music, in New York, April 3, 1860.

Mr. Bryant's personal acquaintance with Irving was never a very intimate one, Irving having lived so long abroad, and, when he returned home, having kept himself so much to his country place. They, however, met now and then in the city, and their intercourse was always friendly and agreeable.

Twelve years since, the task was assigned me of delivering the funeral eulogy of Thomas Cole, the great father of landscape painting in America, the artist who first taught the pencil to portray, with the boldness of nature, our wild forests and lake shores, our mountain regions and the borders of our majestic rivers. Four years later I was bidden to express, in such terms as I could command, the general sorrow which was felt for the death of Fenimore Cooper, equally great and equally the leader of his countrymen in a different walk of creative genius. Another grave has been opened, and he who has gone down to it, earlier than they in his labors and his fame, was, like them, foremost in the peculiar walk to which his genius attracted him. Cole was taken from us in the zenith of his manhood; Cooper, when the sun of life had stooped from its meridian. In both instances the day was darkened by the cloud of death before the natural hour of its close; but Irving was permitted to behold its light until, in the fulness of time and by the ordinary appointment of nature, it was carried below the horizon.

Washington Irving was born in New York, on the 3d of April, 1783, but a few days after the news of the treaty with Great Britain, acknowledging our independence, had been received, to the great contentment of the people. He opened his eyes to the light, therefore, just in the dawn of that Sabbath of peace which brought rest to the land after a weary seven years' war—just as the city of which he was a native, and the republic of which he was yet to be the ornament, were entering upon a career of greatness and prosperity of which those who inhabited them could scarce have dreamed. It seems fitting that one of the first births of the new peace, so welcome to the country, should be that of a genius as kindly and fruitful as peace itself, and destined to make the world better and happier by its gentle influences. In one respect, those who were born at that time had the advantage of those who are educated under the more vulgar influences of the present age. Before their eyes were placed, in the public ac-

tions of the men who achieved our Revolution, noble examples of steady rectitude, magnanimous self-denial, and cheerful self-sacrifice for the sake of their country. Irving came into the world when these great and virtuous men were in the prime of their manhood, and passed his youth in the midst of that general reverence which gathered round them as they grew old.

William Irving, the father of the great author, was a native of Scotland—one of a race in which the instinct of veneration is strong—and a Scottish woman was employed as a nurse in his household. It is related that one day while she was walking in the street with her little charge, then five years old, she saw General Washington in a shop, and entering, led up the boy, whom she presented as one to whom his name had been given. The General turned, laid his hand on the child's head, and gave him his smile and his blessing, little thinking that they were bestowed upon his future biographer. The gentle pressure of that hand Irving always remembered, and that blessing, he believed, attended him through life. Who shall say what power that recollection may have had in keeping him true to high and generous aims?

At the time that Washington Irving was born, the city of New York contained scarcely more than twenty thousand inhabitants. During the war its population had probably diminished. The town was scarcely built up to Warren Street; Broadway, a little beyond, was lost among grassy pastures and tilled fields; the Park, in which now stands our City Hall, was an open common; and beyond it gleamed, in a hollow among the meadows, a little sheet of fresh water, the Kolch, from which a sluggish rivulet stole through the low grounds called Lispenard's Meadows, and, following the course of what is now Canal Street, entered the Hudson. With the exception of the little corner of the island below the present City Hall, the rural character of the whole region was unchanged, and the fresh air of the country entered New York at every street. The town at that time contained a mingled popula-

tion, drawn from different countries; but the descendants of the old Dutch settlers formed a large proportion of the inhabitants, and these preserved many of their peculiar customs, and had not ceased to use the speech of their ancestors at their fireside. Many of them lived in the quaint old houses, built of small yellow bricks from Holland, with their notched gable-ends on the street, which have since been swept away with the language of those who built them.

In the surrounding country, along its rivers and beside its harbors, and in many parts far inland, the original character of the Dutch settlements was still less changed. Here they read their Bibles and said their prayers and listened to sermons in the ancestral tongue. Remains of this language yet linger in a few neighborhoods; but in most, the common schools, and the irruptions of the Yankee race, and the growth of a population newly derived from Europe, have stifled the ancient utterances of New Amsterdam. I remember that, twenty years since, the market people of Bergen chattered Dutch in the steamers which brought them in the early morning to New York. I remember also that, about ten years before, there were families in the westernmost towns of Massachusetts where Dutch was still the household tongue, and matrons of the English stock, marrying into them, were laughed at for speaking it so badly.

It will be readily inferred that the isolation in which the use of a language, strange to the rest of the country, placed these people, would in them form a character of peculiar simplicity, in which there was a great deal that was quaint and not a little that would appear comic to their neighbors of the Anglo-Saxon stock. It was in the midst of such a population, friendly and hospitable, wearing their faults on the outside, and living in homely comfort on their fertile and ample acres, that the boyhood and early youth of Irving were passed. He began, while yet a stripling, to wander about the surrounding country, for the love of rambling was the most remarkable peculiarity of that period of his life. He became, as he him-



self writes, familiar with all the neighboring places famous in history or fable ; knew every spot where a murder or a robbery had been committed or a ghost seen ; strolled into the villages, noted their customs and talked with their sages, a welcome guest doubtless, with his kindly and ingenuous manners and the natural playful turn of his conversation.

I dwell upon these particulars because they help to show how the mind of Irving was trained, and by what process he made himself master of the materials afterward wrought into the forms we so much admire. It was in these rambles that his strong love of nature was awakened and nourished. Those who know the island of New York as it now is, only see few traces of the beauty it wore before it was levelled and smoothed from side to side for the builder. Immediately without the little town it was charmingly diversified with heights and hollows, groves alternating with sunny openings, shining tracks of rivulets, quiet country-seats with trim gardens, broad avenues of trees, and lines of pleached hawthorn hedges. I came to New York in 1825, and I well recollect how much I admired the shores of the Hudson above Canal Street, where the dark rocks jutted far out into the water, with little bays between, above which drooped forest-trees overrun with wild vines. No less beautiful were the shores of the East River, where the orchards of the Stuyvesant estate reached to cliffs beetling over the water, and still farther on were inlets between rocky banks bristling with red cedars. Some idea of this beauty may be formed from looking at what remains of the natural shore of New York island, where the tides of the East River rush to and fro by the rocky verge of Jones's Wood.

Here wandered Irving in his youth, and allowed the aspect of that nature which he afterward portrayed so well to engrave itself on his heart ; but his excursions were not confined to this island. He became familiar with the banks of the Hudson, the extraordinary beauty of which he was the first to describe. He made acquaintance with the Dutch neighbor-

hoods sheltered by its hills—Nyack, Haverstraw, Sing Sing, and Sleepy Hollow, and with the majestic Highlands beyond. His rambles in another direction led him to ancient Communipaw, lying in its quiet recess by New York Bay; to the then peaceful Gowanus, now noisy with the passage of visitors to Greenwood and thronged with funerals; to Hoboken, Horsimus, and Paulus Hook, which has since become a city. A ferry-boat dancing on the rapid tides took him over to Brooklyn, now our flourishing and beautiful neighbor city; then a cluster of Dutch farms, whose possessors lived in broad, low houses, with stoops in front, overshadowed by trees.

The generation with whom Irving grew up read the "Spectator" and the "Rambler," the essays and tales of Mackenzie and those of Goldsmith; the novels of the day were those of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett; the religious world was occupied with the pages of Hannah More, fresh from the press, and with the writings of Doddridge; politicians sought their models of style and reasoning in the speeches of Burke and the writings of Mackintosh and Junius. These were certainly masters of whom no pupil needed to be ashamed, but it can hardly be said that the style of Irving was formed in the school of any of them. His father's library was enriched with authors of the Elizabethan age, and he delighted, we are told, in reading Chaucer and Spenser. The elder of these great poets might have taught him the art of heightening his genial humor with poetic graces, and from both he might have learned a freer mastery over his native English than the somewhat formal taste of that day encouraged. Cowper's poems, at that time, were in everybody's hands, and, if his father had not those of Burns, we must believe that he was no Scotchman. I think we may fairly infer that, if the style of Irving took a bolder range than was allowed in the way of writing which prevailed when he was a youth, it was owing, in a great degree, to his studies in the poets, and especially in those of the earlier English literature.

He owed little to the schools, though he began to attend

them early. His first instructions were given, when he was between four and six years old, by Mrs. Ann Kilmaster, at her school in Ann Street, who seems to have had some difficulty in getting him through the alphabet. In 1789 he was transferred to a school in Fulton Street, then called Partition Street, kept by Benjamin Romaine, who had been a soldier in the Revolution—a sensible man and a good disciplinarian, but probably an indifferent scholar—and here he continued till he was fourteen years of age. He was a favorite with the master, but preferred reading to regular study. At ten years of age he delighted in the wild tales of Ariosto, as translated by Hoole; at eleven he was deep in books of voyages and travels, which he took to school and read by stealth. At that time he composed with remarkable ease and fluency, and exchanged tasks with the other boys, writing their compositions, while they solved his problems in arithmetic, which he detested. At the age of thirteen he tried his hand at composing a play, which was performed by children at a friend's house, and of which he afterward forgot every part, even the title.

Romaine gave up teaching in 1797, and in that year Irving entered a school kept in Beekman Street, by Jonathan Irish, probably the most accomplished of his instructors. He left this school in March, 1798, but continued for a time to receive private lessons from the same teacher at home. Dr. Francis, in his pleasant reminiscences of Irving's early life, speaks of him as preparing to enter Columbia College, and as being prevented by the state of his health; but it is certain that an indifference to the acquisition of learning had taken possession of him at that age, which he afterward greatly regretted.

At the age of sixteen he entered his name as a student at law in the office of Josiah Ogden Hoffman, an eminent advocate, who, in later life, became a judge in one of our principal tribunals. It was while engaged in his professional studies that he made his first appearance as an author. I should have mentioned, among the circumstances that favored the unfolding of his literary capacities, that two of his elder brothers

were men of decided literary tastes—William Irving, some seventeen years his senior, and Dr. Peter Irving, who, in the year 1802, founded a daily paper in New York, at a time when a daily paper was not, as now, an enterprise requiring a large outlay of capital, but an experiment that might be tried and abandoned with little risk. Dr. Irving established the “Morning Chronicle,” and his younger brother contributed a series of essays, bearing the signature of Jonathan Oldstyle, of which Mr. Duyckinck, whose judgment I willingly accept, says that they show how early he acquired the style which so much charms us in his later writings.

In 1804, having reached the age of twenty-one, Irving, alarmed by an increasing weakness of the chest, visited Europe for the sake of his health. He sailed directly to the south of France, landed at Bordeaux in May, and passed two months in Genoa, where he embarked for Messina, in search of a softer climate than any to be found on the Italian peninsula. While at Messina, he saw the fleet of Nelson sweeping by that port on its way to fight the great naval battle of Trafalgar. He made the tour of Sicily, and, crossing from Palermo to Naples, proceeded to Rome. Here he formed the acquaintance of Washington Allston, who was then entering on a career of art as extraordinary as that of Irving in literature. With Allston he made long rambles in the picturesque neighborhood of that old city, visited the galleries of its palaces and villas, and studied their works of art with a delight that rose to enthusiasm. He thought of the dry pursuit of the law which awaited his return to America, and for which he had no inclination, and almost determined to be a painter. Allston encouraged him in this disposition, and together they planned the scheme of a life devoted to the pursuit of art. It was fortunate for the world that, as Irving reflected on the matter, doubts arose in his mind which tempered his enthusiasm and led him to a different destiny. The two friends separated, each to take his own way to renown—Allston to become one of the greatest of painters, and Irving to take his place among



the greatest of authors. Leaving Italy, Irving passed through Switzerland to France, resided in Paris several months, travelled through Flanders and Holland, went to England, and returned to his native country in 1806, after an absence of two years.

At the close of the year he was admitted to practice as an attorney-at-law. He opened an office, but it could not be said that he ever became a practitioner. He began the year 1807 with the earliest of those literary labors which have won him the admiration of the world. On the 24th of January appeared, in the form of a small pamphlet, the first number of a periodical entitled "*Salmagundi*," the joint production of himself, his brother William, and James K. Paulding. The elder brother contributed the poetry, with hints and outlines for some of the essays, but nearly all the prose was written by the two younger associates.

William Irving, however, had talent enough to have taken a more important part in the work. He was a man of wit, well educated, well informed, and author of many clever things written for the press, in a vein of good-natured satire, and published without his name. He was held in great esteem on account of his personal character, and had great weight in Congress, of which he was for some years a member.\*

When "*Salmagundi*" appeared, the quaint old Dutch town in which Irving was born had become transformed to a comparatively gay metropolis. Its population of twenty thousand souls had enlarged to more than eighty thousand, although its aristocratic class had yet their residences in what now seems to us the narrow space between the Battery and Wall Street. The modes and fashions of Europe were imported fresh and fresh. "*Salmagundi*" speaks of leather breeches as all the rage for a morning dress, and flesh-colored smalls for an evening party. Gay equipages dashed through the streets. A new theatre had risen in Park Row, on the

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\* See a brief but well-written memoir of William Irving, by Dr. Berrian.

boards of which Cooper, one of the finest of declaimers, was performing to crowded houses. The churches had multiplied faster than the places of amusement; other public buildings, of a magnificence hitherto unknown, including our present City Hall, had been erected; Tammany Hall, fresh from the hands of the builder, overlooked the Park. We began to affect a taste for pictures, and the rooms of Michael Paff, the famous German picture-dealer in Broadway, were a favorite lounge for such connoisseurs as we then had, who amused themselves with making him talk of Michael Angelo. Ballston Springs were the great fashionable watering-place of the country, to which resorted the planters of the South with splendid equipages and troops of shining blacks in livery.

"Salmagundi" satirized the follies and ridiculed the humors of the time with great prodigality of wit and no less exuberance of good nature. In form it resembles the "Tatler," and that numerous brood of periodical papers to which the success of the "Tatler" and "Spectator" gave birth; but it is in no sense an imitation. Its gayety is its own; its style of humor is not that of Addison nor of Goldsmith, though it has all the genial spirit of theirs; nor is it borrowed from any other writer. It is far more frolicsome and joyous, yet tempered by a native gracefulness. "Salmagundi" was manifestly written without the fear of criticism before the eyes of the authors, and to this sense of perfect freedom in the exercise of their genius is probably owing the charm and delight with which we still read it. Irving never seemed to place much value on the part he contributed to this work, yet I doubt whether he ever excelled some of those papers in "Salmagundi" which bear the most evident marks of his style; and Paulding, though he has since acquired a reputation by his other writings, can hardly be said to have written anything better than the best of those which are ascribed to his pen.

Just before "Salmagundi" appeared, several of the authors who gave the literature of England its present character had

begun to write. For five years the quarterly issues of the "Edinburgh Review," then in the most brilliant period of its existence, had been before the public. Hazlitt had taken his place among the authors, and John Foster had published his essays. Of the poets, Rogers, Campbell, and Moore were beginning to be popular; Wordsworth had published his "Lyrical Ballads"; Scott his "Lay of the Last Minstrel"; Southey his "Madoc"; and Joanna Baillie two volumes of her plays. In this revival of the creative power in literature it is pleasant to see that our own country took part, contributing a work of a character as fresh and original as any they produced on the other side of the Atlantic.

Nearly two years afterward, in the autumn of 1809, appeared in the "Evening Post," addressed to the humane, an advertisement requesting information concerning a small elderly gentleman named Knickerbocker, dressed in a black coat and cocked hat, who had suddenly left his lodgings at the Columbian Hotel in Mulberry Street, and had not been heard of afterward. In the beginning of November a "Traveller" communicated to the same journal the information that he had seen a person answering to this description, apparently fatigued with his journey, resting by the road-side a little north of Kingsbridge. Ten days later, Seth Handaside, the landlord of the Columbian Hotel, gave notice, through the same journal, that he had found in the missing gentleman's chamber "a curious kind of written book," which he should print by way of reimbursing himself for what his lodger owed him. In December following, Inskeep and Bradford, booksellers, published "Diedrich Knickerbocker's History of New York."

"Salmagundi" had prepared the public to receive this work with favor, and Seth Handaside had no reason to regret having undertaken its publication. I recollect well its early and immediate popularity. I was then a youth in college, and, having committed to memory a passage of it to repeat as a declamation before my class, I was so over-

come with laughter, when I appeared on the floor, that I was unable to proceed, and drew upon myself the rebuke of the tutor.\*

I have just read this "History of New York" over again, and I found myself no less delighted than when I first turned its pages in my early youth. When I compare it with other works of wit and humor of a similar length, I find that, unlike most of them, it carries forward the reader to the conclusion without weariness or satiety, so unsought, spontaneous, self-suggested are the wit and the humor. The author makes us laugh, because he can no more help it than we can help laughing. Scott, in one of his letters, compared the humor of this work to that of Swift. The rich vein of Irving's mirth is of a quality quite distinct from the dry drollery of Swift, but they have this in common, that they charm by the utter absence of effort, and this was probably the ground of Scott's remark. A critic in the "London Quarterly," some years after its appearance, spoke of it as a "tantalizing book," on account of his inability to understand what he called "the point of many of the allusions in this political satire." I fear he must have been one of those respectable persons who find it difficult to understand a joke unless it be accompanied with a commentary opening and explaining it to the humblest capacity. Scott found no such difficulty. "Our sides," he says, in a letter to Mr. Brevoort, a friend of Irving, written just after he had read the book, "are absolutely sore with laughing." The mirth of the "History of New York" is of the most transparent sort, and the author, even in the later editions, judiciously abstained from any attempt to make it more intelligible by notes.

I find in this work more manifest traces than in his other writings of what Irving owed to the earlier authors in our language. The quaint poetic coloring and often the phraseology betray the disciple of Chaucer and Spenser. We are

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\* See "Biography," vol. i, p. 90.



conscious of a flavor of the olden time, as of a racy wine of some rich vintage—

“Cooled a long age in the deep-delvèd earth.”

I will not say that there are no passages in this work which are not worthy of their context; that we do not sometimes meet with phraseology which we could wish changed; that the wit does not sometimes run wild and drop here and there a jest which we could willingly spare. We forgive, we overlook, we forget all this as we read, in consideration of the entertainment we have enjoyed, and of that which beckons us onward in the next page. Of all mock-heroic works, “Knickerbocker’s History of New York” is the gayest, the airiest, and the least tiresome.

In 1848 Mr. Irving issued an edition of this work, to which he prefixed what he called an “Apology,” intended in part as an answer to those who thought he had made too free with the names of our old Dutch families. To speak frankly, I do not much wonder that the descendants of the original founders of New Amsterdam should have hardly known whether to laugh or look grave on finding the names of their ancestors, of whom they never thought but with respect, now connected with ludicrous associations, by a wit of another race. In one of his excellent historical discourses Mr. Verplanck had gently complained of this freedom, expressing himself, as he said, more in sorrow than in anger. Even the sorrow, I believe, must have long since wholly passed away, when it is seen how little Irving’s pleasantries have detracted from the honor paid to the early history of our city—at all events, I do not see how it could survive Irving’s good-humored and graceful “Apology.”

It was not long after the publication of the “History of New York” that Irving abandoned the profession of law, for which he had so decided a distaste as never to have fully tried his capacity for pursuing it. Two of his brothers were engaged in commerce, and they received him as a silent partner.

He did not, however, renounce his literary occupations. He wrote, in 1810, a memoir of Campbell, the poet, prefixed to an edition of the writings of that author, which appeared in Philadelphia; and in 1813 and the following year employed himself as editor of the "*Analectic Magazine*," published in the same city, making the experiment of his talent for a vocation to which men of decided literary tastes in this country are strongly inclined to betake themselves. Those who remember this magazine cannot have forgotten that it was a most entertaining miscellany, partly compiled from English publications, mostly periodicals, and partly made up of contributions of some of our own best writers. Paulding wrote for it a series of biographical accounts of the naval commanders of the United States, which added greatly to its popularity; and Verplanck contributed memoirs of Commodore Stewart and General Scott, Barlow, the poet, and other distinguished Americans, which were received with favor. "*The Life of Campbell*," with the exception, perhaps, of some less important contributions to the magazine, is the only published work of Irving between the appearance of the "*History of New York*," in 1809, and that of the "*Sketch Book*," in 1819.

It was during this interval that an event took place which had a marked influence on Irving's future life, affected the character of his writings, and, now that the death of both the persons allows it to be spoken of without reserve, gives a peculiar interest to his personal history. He became attached to a young lady whom he was to have married. She died unwedded, in the flower of her age; there was a sorrowful leave-taking between her and her lover as the grave was about to separate them on the eve of what should have been her bridal; and Irving, ever after, to the close of his life, tenderly and faithfully cherished her memory. In one of the biographical notices published immediately after Irving's death, an old, well-worn copy of the Bible is spoken of, which was kept lying on the table in his chamber, within reach of his bedside, bearing her name on the title-page in a delicate female hand—

a relic which we may presume to have been his constant companion. Those who are fond of searching, in the biographies of eminent men, for the circumstances which determined the bent of their genius, find in this sad event, and the cloud it threw over the hopeful and cheerful period of early manhood, an explanation of the transition from the unbounded playfulness of the "History of New York" to the serious, tender, and meditative vein of the "Sketch Book."

In 1815, soon after our second peace with Great Britain, Irving again sailed for Europe, and fixed himself at Liverpool, where a branch of the large commercial house to which he belonged was established. His old love of rambling returned upon him; he wandered first into Wales, and over some of the finest counties of England, and then northward to the sterner region of the Scottish Highlands. His memoir of Campbell had procured him the acquaintance and friendship of that poet. Campbell gave him, more than a year after his arrival in England, a letter of introduction to Scott, who, already acquainted with him by his writings, welcomed him warmly to Abbotsford, and made him his friend for life. Scott sent a special message to Campbell, thanking him for having made him known to Irving. "He is one of the best and pleasantest acquaintances," said Scott, "that I have made this many a day."

In the same year that he visited Abbotsford his brothers failed. The changes which followed the peace of 1815 swept away their fortunes and his together, and he was now to begin the world anew.

In 1819 he began to publish the "Sketch Book." It was written in England and sent over to New York, where it was issued by Van Winkle in octavo numbers containing from seventy to a hundred pages. In the preface he remarked that he was "unsettled in his abode," that he had "his cares and vicissitudes," and could not, therefore, give these papers the "tranquil attention necessary to finished composition." Several of them were copied with praise in the London "Literary

Gazette," and an intimation was conveyed to the author that some person in London was about to publish them entire. He preferred to do this himself, and accordingly offered the work to the famous bookseller, Murray. Murray was slow in giving the matter his attention, and Irving, after a reasonable delay, wrote to ask that the copy which he had left with him might be returned. It was sent back with a note, pleading excess of occupation, the great cross of all eminent booksellers, and alleging the "want of scope in the nature of the work" as a reason for declining it. This was discouraging, but Irving had the enterprise to print the first volume in London, at his own risk. It was issued by John Miller, and was well received, but a month afterward the publisher failed. Immediately Sir Walter Scott came to London and saw Murray, who allowed himself to be persuaded, the more easily, doubtless, on account of the partial success of the first volume, that the work had more "scope" than he supposed, and purchased the copyright of both volumes for two hundred pounds, which he afterward liberally raised to four hundred.

Whoever compares the "Sketch Book" with the "History of New York" might at first, perhaps, fail to recognize it as the work of the same hand, so much graver and more thoughtful is the strain in which it is written. A more attentive examination, however, shows that the humor in the lighter parts is of the same peculiar and original cast, wholly unlike that of any former author, a humor which Mr. Dana happily characterized as "a fanciful playing with common things, and here and there beautiful touches, till the ludicrous becomes half picturesque." Yet one cannot help perceiving that the author's spirit had been sobered since he last appeared before the public, as if the shadow of a great sorrow had fallen upon it. The greater number of the papers are addressed to our deeper sympathies, and some of them, as, for example, the "Broken Heart," "The Widow and Her Son," and "Rural Funerals," dwell upon the saddest themes. Only in two of them—"Rip Van Winkle" and the "Legend of Sleepy Hol-



low"—does he lay the reins loose on the neck of his frolicsome fancy and allow it to dash forward without restraint; and these rank among the most delightful and popular tales ever written. In our country they have been read, I believe, by nearly everybody who can read at all.

The "Sketch Book" and the two succeeding works of Irving, "Bracebridge Hall" and the "Tales of a Traveller," abound with agreeable pictures of English life, seen under favorable lights and sketched with a friendly pencil. Let me say here that it was not to pay court to the English that he thus described them and their country; it was because he could not describe them otherwise. It was the instinct of his mind to attach itself to the contemplation of the good and the beautiful wherever he found them, and to turn away from the sight of what was evil, misshapen, and hateful. His was not a nature to pry for faults, or disabuse the world of good-natured mistakes; he looked for virtue, love, and truth among men, and thanked God that he found them in such large measure. If there are touches of satire in his writings, he is the best-natured and most amiable of satirists—amiable beyond Horace; and in his irony—for there is a vein of playful irony running through many of his works—there is no tinge of bitterness.

I rejoice, for my part, that we have had such a writer as Irving to bridge over the chasm between the two great nations—that an illustrious American lived so long in England, and was so much beloved there, and sought so earnestly to bring the people of the two countries to a better understanding with each other, and to wean them from the animosities of narrow minds. I am sure that there is not a large-minded and large-hearted man in all our country who can read over the "Sketch Book" and the other writings of Irving, and disown one of the magnanimous sentiments they express with regard to England, or desire to abate the glow of one of his warm and cheerful pictures of English life. Occasions will arise, no doubt, for saying some things in a less accommodating spirit,

and there are men enough on both sides of the Atlantic who can say them ; but Irving was not sent into the world on that errand. A different work was assigned him in the very structure of his mind and the endowments of his heart—a work of peace and brotherhood, and I will say for him that he nobly performed it.

Let me pause here to speak of what I believe to have been the influence of the “Sketch Book” upon American literature. At the time it appeared, the periodical lists of new American publications were extremely meagre, and consisted, to a great extent, of occasional pamphlets and dissertations on the questions of the day. The works of greater pretension were, for the most part, crudely and languidly made up, and destined to be little read. A work like the “Sketch Book,” welcomed on both sides of the Atlantic, showed the possibility of an American author acquiring a fame bounded only by the limits of his own language, and gave an example of the qualities by which it might be won. Within two years afterward we had Cooper’s “Spy” and Dana’s “Idle Man”; the press of our country began, by degrees, to teem with works composed with a literary skill and a spirited activity of intellect until then little known among us. Every year the assertion that we had no literature of our own became less and less true ; and now, when we look over a list of new works by native authors, we find, with an astonishment amounting almost to alarm, that the most voracious devourer of books must despair of being able to read half those which make a fair claim upon his attention. It was after 1819 that the great historians of our country, whose praise is in the mouths of all the nations, began to write. One of them built up the fabric of his fame long after Irving appeared as an author, and slept with Herodotus two years before Irving’s death ; another of the band lives yet to be the ornament of the association before which I am called to speak, and is framing the annals of his country into a work for future ages. Within that period has arisen among us the class which hold vast multitudes spellbound in motionless at-

tention by public discourses, the most perfect of their kind, such as make the fame of Everett. Within that period our theologians have learned to write with the elegance and vivacity of the essayists. We had but one novelist before the era of the "Sketch Book"; their number is now beyond enumeration by any but a professed catalogue-maker, and many of them are read in every cultivated form of human speech. Those whom we acknowledge as our poets—one of whom is the special favorite of our brothers in language who dwell beyond the sea—appeared in the world of letters and won its attention after Irving had become famous. We have wits and humorists and amusing essayists, authors of some of the airiest and most graceful compositions of the present century, and we owe them to the new impulse given to our literature in 1819. I look abroad on these stars of our literary firmament—some crowded together with their minute points of light in a galaxy—some standing apart in glorious constellations; I recognize Arcturus and Orion and Perseus, and the glittering jewels of the Southern Cross, and the Pleiades shedding sweet influences; but the Evening Star, the soft and serene light that glowed in their van, the precursor of them all, has sunk below the horizon. The spheres, meantime, perform their appointed courses; the same motion which lifted them up to the mid-sky bears them onward to their setting; and they, too, like their bright leader, must soon be carried by it below the earth.

Irving went to Paris in 1820, where he passed the remainder of the year and part of the next, and where he became acquainted with the poet Moore, who frequently mentions him in his Diary. Moore and he were much in each other's company, and the poet has left on record an expression of his amazement at the rapidity with which "Bracebridge Hall" was composed—one hundred and thirty pages in ten days. The winter of 1822 found him in Dresden. In that year was published "Bracebridge Hall," the groundwork of which is a charming description of country life in England, interspersed



with narratives, the scene of which is laid in other countries. Of these, the Norman tale of "Annette Delarbre" seems to me the most beautiful and affecting thing of its kind in all his works; so beautiful, indeed, that I can hardly see how he who has once read it can resist the desire to read it again. In "Bracebridge Hall" we have the Stout Gentleman, full of certain minute paintings of familiar objects, where not a single touch is thrown in that does not heighten the comic effect of the narrative. If I am not greatly mistaken, the most popular novelists of the day have learned from this pattern the skill with which they have wrought up some of their most striking passages, both grave and gay. In composing "Bracebridge Hall," Irving showed that he had not forgotten his native country; and in the pleasant tale of Dolph Heyliger he went back to the banks of that glorious river beside which he was born.

In 1823, Irving, still a wanderer, returned to Paris, and, in the year following, gave the world his "Tales of a Traveller." Murray, in the mean time, had become fully weaned from the notion that Irving's writings lacked the quality which he called "scope," for he had paid a thousand guineas for the copyright of "Bracebridge Hall," and now offered fifteen hundred pounds for the "Tales of a Traveller," which Irving accepted. "He might have had two thousand," says Moore, but this assembly will not, I hope, think the worse of him, if it be acknowledged that the world contained men who were sharper than he at driving a bargain. The "Tales of a Traveller" are most remarkable for their second part, entitled "Buckthorne and his Friends," in which the author introduces us to literary life in its various aspects, as he had observed it in London, and to the relations in which authors at that time stood to the booksellers. His sketches of the different personages are individual, characteristic, and diverting, yet with what a kindly pencil they are all drawn! His good nature overspreads and harmonizes everything, like the warm atmosphere which so much delights us in a painting.



Irving, still "unsettled in his abode," passed the winter of 1825 in the south of France. When you are in that region you see the snowy summits of the Spanish Pyrenees looking down upon you; Spanish visitors frequent the watering-places; Spanish pedlers, in their handsome costume, offer you the fabrics of Barcelona and Valencia; Spanish peasants come to the fairs; the traveller feels himself almost in Spain already, and is haunted by the desire of visiting that remarkable country. To Spain, Irving went in the latter part of the year, invited by our minister at Madrid, Alexander H. Everett, at the suggestion of Mr. Rich, the American consul, an industrious and intelligent collector of Spanish works relating to America. His errand was to translate into English the documents relating to the discovery and early history of our continent, collected by the research of Navarrete. He passed the winter of 1826 at the Spanish capital, as the guest of Mr. Rich; the following season took him to Granada, and he lingered awhile in that beautiful region, profusely watered by the streams that break from the Snowy Ridge. In 1827 he again visited the south of Spain, gathering materials for his "Life of Columbus," which, immediately after his arrival in Spain, he had determined to write, instead of translating the documents of Navarrete. In Spain he began and finished that work, after having visited the places associated with the principal events in the life of his hero. Murray was so well satisfied with its "scope" that he gave him three thousand guineas for the copyright, and laid it before the public in 1828. Like the other works of Irving, it was published here at the same time as in London.

The "Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus" placed Irving among the historians, for the biography of that great discoverer is a part, and a remarkable part, of the history of the world. Of what was strictly and simply personal in his adventures, much, of course, has passed into irremediable oblivion; what was both personal and historical is yet outstanding above the shadow that has settled upon the rest.

The work of Irving was at once in everybody's hands and eagerly read. Navarrete vouched for its historical accuracy and completeness. Jeffrey declared that no work could ever take its place. It was written with a strong love of the subject, and to this it owes much of its power over the reader. Columbus was one of those who, with all their faculties occupied by one great idea, and bent on making it a practical reality, are looked upon as crazed, and pitied and forgotten if they fail; but, if they succeed, are venerated as the glory of their age. The poetic elements of his character and history, the grandeur and mystery of his design, his prophetic sagacity, his hopeful and devout courage, and his disregard of the ridicule of meaner intellects took a strong hold on the mind of Irving, and formed the inspiration of the work.

Mr. Duyckinck gives, on the authority of one who knew Irving intimately, an instructive anecdote relating to the "Life of Columbus." When the work was nearly finished, it was put into the hands of Lieutenant Slidell Mackenzie, himself an agreeable writer, then on a visit to Spain, who read it with a view of giving a critical opinion of its merits. "It is quite perfect," said he, on returning the manuscript, "except the style, and that is unequal." The remark made such an impression on the mind of the author that he wrote over the whole narrative with a view of making the style more uniform but he afterward thought that he had not improved it.

In this I have no doubt that Irving was quite right, and that it would have been better if he had never touched the work after he had brought it to the state which satisfied his individual judgment. An author can scarcely commit a greater error than to alter what he writes, except when he has a clear perception that the alteration is for the better, and can make it with as hearty a confidence in himself as he felt in giving the work its first shape. What strikes me as an occasional defect in the "Life of Columbus" is this elaborate uniformity of style—a certain prismatic color-

ing in passages where absolute simplicity would have satisfied us better. It may well be supposed that Irving originally wrote some parts of the work with the quiet plainness of a calm relater of facts, and others with the spirit and fire of one who had become warmed with his subject, and this probably gave occasion to what was said of the inequality of the style. The attempt to elevate the diction of the simpler portions, we may suppose, marred what Irving afterward perceived had really been one of the merits of the work.

In the spring of 1829 Irving made another visit to the south of Spain, collecting materials from which he afterward composed some of his most popular works. When the traveller now visits Granada and is taken to the Alhambra, his guide will say: "Here is one of the curiosities of the place; this is the chamber occupied by Washington Irving," and he will show an apartment, from the windows of which you have a view of the Genil, with the mountain peaks overlooking it, and hear the murmur of many mountain brooks at once as they hurry to the plain. In July of the same year he repaired to London, where he was to act as Secretary of the American Legation. We had at that time certain controversies with the British government which were the subject of negotiation. Irving took great interest in these, and in some letters which I saw at the time stated the points in dispute at considerable length and with admirable method and perspicuity. In London he published his "*Chronicles of the Conquest of Granada*," one of the most delightful of his works, an exact history—for such it is admitted to be by those who have searched most carefully the ancient records of Spain—yet so full of personal incident, so diversified with surprising turns of fortune, and these wrought up with such picturesque effect, that, to use an expression of Pope, a young lady might read it by mistake for a romance. In 1831 he gave the world another work on Spanish history, the "*Voyages of the Companions of Columbus*," and in the year following, the

"Alhambra," which is another "Sketch Book," with the scenes laid in Spain.

While in Spain, Irving had planned a *Life of Cortes*, the conqueror of Mexico, and collected the facts from which it was to be written. When, afterward, he had actually begun the composition of the work, he happened to learn that Prescott designed to write the "*History of the Mexican Conquest*," and immediately he desisted. It was his intention to interweave with the narrative descriptions of the ancient customs of the aborigines, such as their modes of warfare and their gorgeous pageants, by way of relief to the sanguinary barbarities of the Conquest. He saw what rich materials of the picturesque these opened to him, and, if he had accomplished his plan, he would probably have produced one of his most popular works.

In 1832 Irving returned to New York. He returned, after an absence of seventeen years, to find his native city doubled in population; its once quiet waters alive with sails and furrowed by steamers passing to and fro; its wharves crowded with masts; the heights which surround it, and which he remembered wild and solitary, and lying in forest, now crowned with stately country-seats, or with dwellings clustered in villages, and everywhere the activity and bustle of a prosperous and hopeful people. And he, too, how had he returned? The young and comparatively obscure author, whose works had found here and there only a reader in England, had achieved a fame as wide as the civilized world. All the trophies he had won in this field he brought home to lay at the feet of his country. Meanwhile all the country was moved to meet him; the rejoicing was universal that one who had represented us so illustriously abroad was henceforth to live among us.

Irving hated public dinners, but he was forced to accept one pressed upon him by his enthusiastic countrymen. It was given at the City Hotel on the 30th of May, Chancellor Kent presiding, and the most eminent citizens of New York



assembling at the table. I remember the accounts of this festivity reaching me as I was wandering in Illinois, hovering on the skirts of the Indian War, in a region now populous, but then untilled and waste, and I could only write to Irving and ask leave to add my voice to the general acclamation. In his address at the dinner, Chancellor Kent welcomed the historian of New Amsterdam back to his native city; and Irving, in reply, poured forth his heart in the warmest expressions of delight at finding himself again among his countrymen and kindred, in a land of sunshine and freedom and hope. "I am asked," he said, "how long I mean to remain here. They know little of my heart who can ask me this question. I answer, As long as I live."

The instinct of rambling had not, however, forsaken him. In the summer after his return he made a journey to the country west of the Mississippi, in company with Mr. Ellsworth, a commissioner intrusted with the removal of certain Indian tribes, and roamed over wild regions, then the hunting-grounds of the savage, but into which the white man has since brought his plough and his herds. He did not publish his account of this journey until 1835, when it appeared as the first volume of the "*Crayon Miscellany*," under the title of a "*Tour on the Prairies*." In this work the original West is described as Irving knew how to describe it, and the narrative is in that vein of easy gayety peculiar to his writings. "*Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey*" formed the second volume of the "*Crayon Miscellany*," and to these he afterward added another, entitled "*Legends of the Conquest of Spain*."

In 1836 he published "*Astoria; or, Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains*," a somewhat curious example of literary skill. A voluminous commercial correspondence was the dull ore of the earth which he refined and wrought into symmetry and splendor. Irving reduced to a regular narrative the events to which it referred, bringing out the picturesque whenever he found it, and enlivening the whole with touches of his native humor. His nephew, Pierre

M. Irving, lightened his labor materially by examining and collating the letters and making memoranda of their contents. In 1837 he prepared for the press the "Adventures of Captain Bonneville, of the United States Army, in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West." He had the manuscript journal of Bonneville before him, but the hand of Irving is apparent in every sentence.

About the time that this work appeared, Irving was drawn into the only public controversy in which, so far as I know, he ever engaged. William Leggett then conducted a weekly periodical, entitled the "Plaindealer," remarkable both for its ability and its love of disputation. It attacked Mr. Irving for altering a line or two in one of my poems, with a view of making it less offensive to English readers, and for writing a preface to the American edition of his "Tour on the Prairies," full of professions of love for his country, which were studiously omitted from the English edition. From these circumstances the "Plaindealer" drew an inference unfavorable to Irving's sincerity.\* . . .

Several papers were written by Irving, in 1839 and the following year, for the "Knickerbocker," a monthly periodical conducted by his friend, Lewis Gaylord Clark, all of them such as he only could write. They were afterward collected into a volume, entitled "Wolfert's Roost," from the ancient name of that beautiful residence of his on the banks of the Hudson, in which they were mostly written. They were, perhaps, read with more interest in the magazine than in the volume, just as some paintings of the highest merit are seen with more pleasure in the artist's room than on the walls of an exhibition.

In 1842 he went to Spain as the American minister, and remained in that country for four years. I have never understood that anything occurred during that time to put his talents

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\* Mr. Bryant here describes the controversy which grew out of the assault of the newspaper, but which I omit, as it is to be found more at length in the "Biography," Vol. I, pp. 342-344.—ED.

as a negotiator to any rigorous test. He was a sagacious and intelligent observer; his connection with the American legation in London had given him diplomatic experience, and I have heard that he sent home to his government some valuable despatches on the subject of our relations with Spain. In other respects he did, at least, what all American ministers at the European courts are doing, and I suppose my hearers understand very well what that is; but, if there had been any question of importance to be settled, I think he might have acquitted himself as well as many who have had a higher reputation for dexterity in business. When I was at Madrid, in 1857, a distinguished Spaniard said to me: "Why does not your government send out Washington Irving to this court? Why do you not take as your agent the man whom all Spain admires, venerates, loves? I assure you, it would be difficult for our government to refuse anything which Irving should ask, and his signature would make almost any treaty acceptable to our people."

Returning in 1846, Irving went back to Sunnyside, on the Hudson, and continued to make it his abode for the rest of his life. Those who passed up and down the river before the year 1835 may remember a neglected cottage on a green bank, with a few locust-trees before it, close to where a little brook brings in its tribute to the mightier stream. In that year Irving became its possessor; he gave it the name it now bears, planted its pleasant slopes with trees and shrubs, laid it out in walks, built out-houses, and converted the cottage into a more spacious dwelling, in the old Dutch style of architecture, with crow-steps on the gables; a quaint, picturesque building, with "as many angles and corners," to use his own words, "as a cocked hat." He caused creeping plants and climbing roses to be trained up its walls; the trees he planted prospered in that sheltered situation, and were filled with birds, which would not leave their nests at the approach of the kind master of the place. The house became almost hidden from sight by their lofty summits, the perpetual rustlings of which, to those

who sat within, were blended with the murmurs of the water. Van Tassel would have had some difficulty in recognizing his old abode in this little paradise, with the beauty of which one of Irving's friends\* has made the public familiar in prose and verse.

At Sunnyside, Irving wrote his "Life of Oliver Goldsmith." Putnam, the bookseller, had said to him one day: "Here is Foster's 'Life of Goldsmith'; I think of republishing it." "I once wrote a Memoir of Goldsmith," answered Irving, "which was prefixed to an edition of his works printed at Paris, and I have thought of enlarging it and making it more perfect." "If you will do that," was the reply of the bookseller, "I shall not republish the Life by Foster." Within three months afterward, Irving's "Life of Goldsmith" was finished and in press. It was so much superior to the original sketch in the exactness of the particulars, the entertainment of the anecdotes, and the beauty of the style, that it was really a new work. For my part, I know of nothing like it. I have read no biographical memoir which carries forward the reader so delightfully and with so little tediousness of recital or reflection. I never take it up without being tempted to wish that Irving had written more works of the kind; but this could hardly be; for where could he have found another Goldsmith?

In 1850 appeared his "Lives of Mahomet and his Successors," composed principally from memoranda made by him during his residence in Spain, and in the same year he completed the revisal of his works for a new edition, which was brought out by Putnam, a bookseller of whose obliging and honorable conduct he delighted to speak. Irving was a man with whom it was not easy to have a misunderstanding; but, even if he had been of a different temper, these commendations would have been none the less deserved.

When Cooper died, toward the close of the year 1850, Irving, who had not long before met him, apparently in the full

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\* H. T. Tuckerman.



vigor of his excellent constitution, was much shocked by the event, and took part in the meetings held for the purpose of collecting funds to erect a monument to his memory in this city—a design which, I am sorry to say, has wholly failed. He wrote a letter advising that the monument should be a statue, and attended the great memorial meeting held in Metropolitan Hall, in February of the next year, at which Webster presided. He was then near the end of his sixty-eighth year, and was remarked as one over whom the last twenty years had passed lightly. He, whom Dr. Francis describes as in early life a slender and delicate youth, preserving his health by habitual daily exercise, appeared before that vast assembly a fresh, well-preserved gentleman scarcely more than elderly, with firm but benevolent features, well-knit and muscular limbs, and an elastic step, the sign of undiminished physical vigor.

In his retirement at Sunnyside, Irving planned and executed his last great work, the “Life of Washington,” to which he says he had long looked forward as his crowning literary effort. Constable, the Edinburgh bookseller, had proposed it to him thirty years before, and he then resolved to undertake it as soon as he should return to the United States. It was postponed in favor of other projects, but never abandoned. At length the expected time seemed to have arrived; his other tasks had been successfully performed; the world was waiting for new works from his pen; his mind and body were yet in their vigor; the habit and the love of literary production yet remained, and he addressed himself to this greatest of his labors.

Yet he had his misgivings, though they could not divert him from his purpose. “They expect too much—too much,” he said to a friend of mine, to whom he was speaking of the magnitude of the task and the difficulty of satisfying the public. We cannot wonder at these doubts. At the time when he began to employ himself steadily on this work, he was near the age of threescore and ten, when with most men the season of hope and confidence is past. He was like one who

should begin the great labor of the day when the sun was shedding his latest beams, and what if the shadows of night should descend upon him before his task was ended ! A vast labor had been thrown upon him by the almost numberless documents and papers recently brought to light relating to the events in which Washington was concerned—such as were amassed and digested by the research of Sparks, and accompanied by the commentary of his excellent biography. These were all to be carefully examined and their spirit extracted. Historians had in the mean time arisen in our country, of a world-wide fame, with whose works his own must be compared, and he was to be judged by a public whom he, more than almost any other man, had taught to be impatient of mediocrity.

I do not believe, however, that Irving's task would have been performed so ably if it had been undertaken when it was suggested by Constable ; the narrative could not have been so complete in its facts ; it might not have been written with the same becoming simplicity. It was fortunate that the work was delayed till it could be written from the largest store of materials, till its plan was fully matured in all its fair proportions, and till the author's mind had become filled with the profoundest veneration for his subject.

The simplicity already mentioned is the first quality of this work which impresses the reader. Here is a man of genius, a poet by temperament, writing the life of a man of transcendent wisdom and virtue—a life passed amid great events, and marked by inestimable public services. There is a constant temptation to eulogy, but the temptation is resisted ; the actions of his hero are left to speak their own praise. He records events reverently, as one might have recorded them before the art of rhetoric was invented, with no exaggeration, with no parade of reflection ; the lessons of the narrative are made to impress themselves on the mind by the earnest and conscientious relation of facts. Meantime, the narrator keeps himself in the background, solely occupied with the due pres-

entation of his subject. Our eyes are upon the actors whom he sets before us—we never think of Mr. Irving.

A closer examination reveals another great merit of the work, the admirable proportion in which the author keeps the characters and events of his story. I suppose he could hardly have been conscious of this merit, and that it was attained without a direct effort. Long meditation had probably so shaped and matured the plan in his mind, and so arranged its parts in their just symmetry, that, executing it conscientiously as he did, he could not have made it a different thing from what we have it. There is nothing distorted, nothing placed in too broad a light or thrown too far in the shade. The incidents of our Revolutionary War, the great event of Washington's life, pass before us as they passed before the eyes of the commander-in-chief himself, and from time to time varied his designs. Washington is kept always in sight, and the office of the biographer is never allowed to become merged in that of the historian.

The men who were the companions of Washington in the field or in civil life are shown only in their association with him, yet are their characters drawn, not only with skill and spirit, but with a hand that delighted to do them justice. Nothing, I believe, could be more abhorrent to Irving's ideas of the province of a biographer than the slightest detraction from the merits of others, that his hero might appear the more eminent. So remarkable is his work in this respect that an accomplished member of the Historical Society,\* who has analyzed the merits of the "Life of Washington" with a critical skill which makes me ashamed to speak of the work after him, has declared that no writer, within the circle of his reading, "has so successfully established his claim to the rare and difficult virtue of impartiality."

I confess my admiration of this work becomes the greater the more I examine it. In the other writings of Irving are

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\* G. W. Greene, "Biographical Studies."

beauties which strike the reader at once. In this I recognize qualities which lie deeper, and which I was not sure of finding—a rare equity of judgment; a large grasp of the subject; a profound philosophy, independent of philosophical forms, and even instinctively rejecting them; the power of reducing an immense crowd of loose materials to clear and orderly arrangement, and forming them into one grand whole, as a skilful commander, from a rabble of raw recruits, forms a disciplined army, animated and moved by a single will.

The greater part of this last work of Irving was composed while he was in the enjoyment of what might be called a happy old age. This period of his life was not without its infirmities, but his frame was yet unwasted, his intellect bright and active, and the hour of decay seemed distant. He had become more than ever the object of public veneration, and in his beautiful retreat enjoyed all the advantages with few of the molestations of acknowledged greatness; a little too much visited, perhaps, but submitting to the intrusion of his admirers with his characteristic patience and kindness. That retreat had now become more charming than ever, and the domestic life within was as beautiful as the nature without. A surviving brother, older than himself, shared it with him, and several affectionate nephews and nieces stood to him in the relation of sons and daughters. He was surrounded by neighbors who saw him daily, and honored and loved him the more for knowing him so well.

While he was engaged in writing the last pages of his "Life of Washington," his countrymen heard with pain that his health was failing and his strength ebbing away. He completed the work, however, though he was not able to revise the last sheets, and we then heard that his nights had become altogether sleepless. He was himself of opinion that his labors had been too severe for his time of life, and had sometimes feared that the power to continue them would desert him before his work could be finished. A catarrh, to which he had been subject, had, by some injudicious prescription, been con-



verted into an asthma, and the asthma, according to the testimony of his physician, Dr. Peters, one of the most attentive and assiduous of his profession, was at length accompanied by an enlargement of the heart. This disease ended in the usual way by a sudden dissolution. On the 28th of November last, in the evening, he had withdrawn to his room, attended by one of his nieces carrying his medicines, when he complained of a sudden feeling of intense sadness, sank immediately into her arms, and died without a struggle.

Although he had reached an age beyond which life is rarely prolonged, the news of his death was everywhere received with profound sorrow. The whole country mourned, but the grief was most deeply felt in his immediate neighborhood; the little children wept for the loss of their good friend. When the day of his funeral arrived, the people gathered from far and near to attend it; this capital poured forth its citizens; the trains on the railway were crowded, and a multitude, like a mass meeting, but reverentially silent, moved through the streets of the neighboring village, which had been dressed in the emblems of mourning, and clustered about the church and the burial ground. It was the first day of December; the pleasant Indian summer of our climate had been prolonged far beyond its usual date; the sun shone with his softest splendor, and the elements were hushed into a perfect calm; it was like one of the blandest days of October. The hills and forests, the meadows and waters which Irving had loved, seemed listening, in that quiet atmosphere, as the solemn funeral service was read.

It was read over the remains of one whose life had well prepared his spirit for its new stage of being. Irving did not aspire to be a theologian, but his heart was deeply penetrated with the better part of religion, and he had sought humbly to imitate the example of the Great Teacher of our faith.

That amiable character which makes itself so manifest in the writings of Irving was seen in all his daily actions. He was ever ready to do kind offices; tender of the feelings of

others ; carefully just, but ever leaning to the merciful side of justice ; averse to strife ; and so modest that the world never ceased to wonder how it should have happened that one so much praised should have gained so little assurance. He envied no man's success, he sought to detract from no man's merits, but he was acutely sensitive both to praise and to blame—sensitive to such a degree that an unfavorable criticism of any of his works would almost persuade him that they were as worthless as the critic represented them. He thought so little of himself that he could never comprehend why it was that he should be the object of curiosity or reverence.

From the time that he began the composition of his "Sketch Book" his whole life was the life of an author. His habits of composition were, however, by no means regular. When he was in the vein, the periods would literally stream from his pen ; at other times he would scarcely write anything. For two years after the failure of his brothers at Liverpool he found it almost impossible to write a line. He was throughout life an early riser, and, when in the mood, would write all the morning and till late in the day, wholly engrossed with his subject. In the evening he was ready for any cheerful pastime, in which he took part with an animation almost amounting to high spirits. These intervals of excitement and intense labor, sometimes lasting for weeks, were succeeded by languor, and at times by depression of spirits, and for months the pen would lie untouched ; even to answer a letter at these times was an irksome task.

He wrote but rarely in the evening, knowing—so at least I infer—that no habit makes severer demands upon the nervous system than this. It was owing, I doubt not, to this prudent husbanding of his powers, along with his somewhat abstinent habits and the exercise which he took every day, that he was able to preserve unimpaired to so late a period the faculties employed in original composition. He had been a vigorous walker and a fearless rider, and in his declining years he drove out daily, not only for the sake of the open

air and motion, but to refresh his mind with the aspect of nature. One of his favorite recreations was listening to music, of which he was an indulgent critic, and he contrived to be pleased and soothed by strains less artfully modulated than fastidious ears are apt to require.

His facility in writing and the charm of his style were owing to very early practice, the reading of good authors, and the native elegance of his mind ; and not, in my opinion, to any special study of the graces of manner or any anxious care in the use of terms and phrases. Words and combinations of words are sometimes found in his writings to which a fastidious taste might object ; but these do not prevent his style from being one of the most agreeable in the whole range of our literature. It is transparent as the light, sweetly modulated, unaffected, the native expression of a fertile fancy, a benignant temper, and a mind which, delighting in the noble and the beautiful, turned involuntarily away from their opposites. His peculiar humor was, in a great measure, the offspring of this constitution of his mind. This "fanciful playing with common things," as Mr. Dana calls it, is never coarse, never tainted with grossness, and always in harmony with our better sympathies. It not only tinged his writings, but overflowed in his delightful conversation.

I have thus set before you, my friends, with such measure of ability as I possess, a rapid and imperfect sketch of the life, character, and genius of Washington Irving. Other hands will yet give the world a bolder, more vivid, and more exact portraiture. In the mean time, when I consider for how many years he stood before the world as an author, with a still increasing fame—half a century in this most changeful of centuries—I cannot hesitate to predict for him a deathless renown. Since he began to write, empires have risen and passed away ; mighty captains have appeared on the stage of the world, performed their part, and been called to their account ; wars have been fought and ended, which have changed the destinies of the human race. New arts have been in-

vented and adopted, and have pushed the old out of use ; the household economy of half mankind has undergone a revolution. Science has learned a new dialect and forgotten the old ; the chemist of 1807 would be a vain babbler among his brethren of the present day, and would in turn become bewildered in the attempt to understand them. Nation utters speech to nation in words that pass from realm to realm with the speed of light. Distant countries have been made neighbors ; the Atlantic Ocean has become a narrow frith, and the Old World and the New shake hands across it ; the East and the West look in at each other's windows. The new inventions bring new calamities, and men perish in crowds by the recoil of their own devices. War has learned more frightful modes of havoc, and armed himself with deadlier weapons ; armies are borne to the battle-field on the wings of the wind, and dashed against each other and destroyed with infinite bloodshed. We grow giddy with this perpetual whirl of strange events, these rapid and ceaseless mutations ; the earth seems to reel under our feet, and we turn to those who write like Irving for some assurance that we are still in the same world into which we were born ; we read, and are quieted and consoled. In his pages we see that the language of the heart never becomes obsolete ; that Truth and Good and Beauty, the offspring of God, are not subject to the changes which beset the inventions of men. We become satisfied that he whose works were the delight of our fathers, and are still ours, will be read with the same pleasure by those who come after us.

If it were becoming at this time and in this assembly to address our departed friend as if in his immediate presence, I would say : " Farewell ! thou who hast entered into the rest prepared, from the foundation of the world, for serene and gentle spirits like thine : Farewell ! happy in thy life, happy in thy death, happier in the reward to which that death was the assured passage ; fortunate in attracting the admiration of the world to thy beautiful writings, still more fortunate in having written nothing which did not tend to promote the reign of



magnanimous forbearance and generous sympathies among thy fellow-men. The brightness of that enduring fame which thou hast won on earth is but a shadowy symbol of the glory to which thou art admitted in the world beyond the grave. Thy errand upon earth was an errand of peace and good-will to men, and thou art in a region where hatred and strife never enter, and where the harmonious activity of those who inhabit it acknowledges no impulse less noble or less holy than that of love."

## FITZ-GREENE HALLECK.\*

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I HAVE yielded with some hesitation to the request that I should read before the Historical Society a paper on the Life and Writings of Fitz-Greene Halleck.† I hesitated, because the subject had been most ably treated by others. I consented, because it seemed to be expected, by his friends and admirers, that one who like myself was so nearly his contemporary, who read his poems as they appeared, and through whom several of the finest of them were given to the world, ought not to let a personal friend, a genial companion, and an admirable poet, pass from us without some words setting forth his merits and our sorrow. It is, besides, a relief under such

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\* Notices of his Life and Writings, read before the New York Historical Society, February 3, 1869.

† Mr. Bryant first became acquainted with Mr. Halleck in 1825-'26, when, as the editor of the "New York Review," afterward the "United States Review," he published "Marco Bozzaris," "Burns," and other of the shorter and best-known pieces of the poet. The "Red Jacket" also first appeared in the "Talisman," an annual of which Mr. Bryant was one of the editors. Although opposed to each other in political and religious opinions, their friendship continued uninterrupted and cordial until the death of Halleck in 1867. Halleck was so fervent an admirer of the poetry of his friend that he could repeat the most of it from memory; and he once said to an acquaintance: "These newspaper critics pretend to compare Dana, Percival, myself, and other rhymers with Bryant; why, he has blotted out more good verses than would make the reputation of a dozen of us." After the death of Halleck, Mr. Bryant took great interest in the movement which resulted in the erection of a monument to his memory, in his native town of Guilford, Connecticut, in 1868, and also in that for a full-length bronze statue of him in Central Park.

a loss to dwell upon the characteristic qualities of the departed. It seems in an imperfect manner to prolong his existence among us; as we repeat his words, we seem to behold the friendly brightness of his eye, to hear the familiar tones of his voice. It is as when, in looking upon the quivering surface of a river, we see the image of an object on the bank which is itself hidden from our eyes.

The southern shore of Connecticut, bordering on Long Island Sound, is a beautiful region. I have never passed along this shore, extending from Byron River to the Naugatuck, without admiring it. Here the somewhat severe climate of New England is softened by the sea air and the shelter of the hills. Such charming combinations of rock and valley, of forest and stream, of smooth meadows, quiet inlets, and green promontories, are rarely to be found. A multitude of clear and rapid rivers, the king of which is the majestic Connecticut, here wind their way to the Sound among picturesque hills, cliffs, and woods.

It was at Guilford, in this pleasant region, before which the Sound expands into a sea, that Halleck, on the 8th of July, 1790, was born. Poets, it is true, and poets of great genius, have been born in cities or in countries of the tamest aspect; yet I think it may be truly said that the sense of diversified beauty or solemn grandeur is awakened and nourished in the young mind by those qualities in the scenery which surround the poet's childhood. I do not find, however, in Halleck's verses any particular recognition of the uncommon beauty of the region to which he owed his birth. In the well-known lines on Connecticut he says :

“And still her gray rocks tower above the sea,  
That crouches at their feet a conquered wave ;  
'Tis a rough land of earth, and stone, and tree,” etc.

In another passage of the same poem, where he celebrates the charms of the region, he speaks solely of the tints of the atmosphere and the autumnal glory of its forests :

“—in the autumn time  
Earth has no purer and no lovelier clime.

“Her clear warm heaven at noon, the mist that shrouds  
Her twilight hills, her cool and starry eves,  
The glorious splendor of her sunset clouds,  
The rainbow beauty of her forest leaves,” etc.

Yet that this omission did not arise from any insensibility to the beauty of form in landscape is sufficiently manifested by the enthusiastic apostrophe to Weehawken, which escapes from him, as if in spite of himself, in his “Fanny,” amid the satirical reflections which form the staple of the poem. He gave a higher proof of his affection for his birthplace, withdrawing in the evening of life from the bustling city, where the greater part of his years had been passed, and where he had acquired his fame, to the pleasant haunts of his childhood, to dwell where his parents dwelt, to die where they died, and to be buried beside them. His end was like that of the rivers of his native State, which, after dashing and sparkling over their stony beds, lay themselves down between quiet meadows and glide softly to the Sound.

Halleck had a worthy parentage. His father, Israel Halleck, according to Mr. Duyckinck, was a man of extensive reading, a tenacious memory, pithy conversation, and courteous manners. His mother was of the Eliot family, a descendant of John Eliot, one of the noblest of the New England worthies, the translator of the Bible into the Indian language, the religious teacher, friend, and protector of the Indians, the rigid non-conformist, the charitable pastor who distributed his salary among his needy neighbors, who preached and prayed against wigs and tobacco, without being able to triumph over the power of fashion or the force of habit, and of whom it is said that his sermons were remarkable for their simplicity of expression and freedom from the false taste of the age. Halleck inherited his ancestor's spirit of non-conformity. He would argue in favor of an Established Church among peo-



ple with whom the dissociation of Church and State was an article of political faith, and astonished his republican neighbors by declaring himself a partisan of monarchy. He was not easily diverted from any course of conduct by deference to public opinion. Mr. Cozzens relates that, when Jacob Barker had fallen under the public censure, Halleck, then his clerk, was told that he ought to leave his service. He answered that he would not desert the sinking ship, and that the time to stand by his friends was when they were unfortunate. He had a certain persistency of temper which was transmitted, I think, from the old Puritan stock. It was some fifteen or twenty years after he came to live in New York that he said to me: "I like to go on with the people whom I begin with. I have the same boarding-house now that I had when I first came to town; my clothes are made by the same tailor, and I employ the same shoemaker."

I do not find that Halleck began to write verses prematurely. Poetry, with most men, is one of the sins of their youth, and a great deal of it is written before the authors can be justly said to have reached years of discretion. With the greater number it runs its course and passes off like the measles or the chicken-pox; with a few it takes the chronic form and lasts a lifetime; and I have known cases of persons attacked by it in old age. A very small number who begin, like Milton, Cowley, and Pope, to write verses when scarce out of childhood, afterward become eminent as poets; but, as a rule, precocity in this department of letters is no sign of genius. In the verses of Halleck which General Wilson has collected, written in 1809 and 1810 and earlier, I discern but slight traces of his peculiar genius, and none of the grace and spirit which afterward became so marked. They are better, it is true, than the juvenile poems which encumber the later collections of the poetry of Thomson, but they are not characteristic. Between the time when they were written and that in which he produced the poems which are commonly called the *Croakers*, his poetic faculty ripened rapidly, and as remarkably

as that of Byron between the publications of his "Hours of Idleness" and that of his "Childe Harold." His fancy had been quickened into new life; he had learned to wield his native language like a master; he had discovered that he was a wit as well as a poet; and his voice had acquired that sweetness and variety of modulation which afterward distinguished it. The poems which bear the signature of Croaker, and Croaker & Co., written by him in conjunction with his friend, Joseph Rodman Drake, began in 1819 to appear in the "Evening Post," then conducted by Mr. Coleman. That gentleman observed their merit with surprise, commended them in his daily sheet, and was gratified to learn that the whole town was talking of them. It was several years after this that Mr. Coleman said to me: "I was curious to see the young men whose witty verses, published in my journal, made so much noise, and desired an interview with them. They came before me, and I was greatly struck by their appearance. Drake looked the poet; you saw the stamp of genius in every feature. Halleck had the aspect of a satirist."

There is a certain manner common to both authors in these poems. They both wrote with playfulness and gayety, and, although with the freedom of men who never expected to be known, yet without malignity; but it seems to me that Halleck drove home his jests with the sharpest percussion, and there are some flashes of that fire which blazed out in his "Marco Bozzaris."

The poem entitled "Fanny" was published about that time. It is, in the main, a satire upon those who, finding themselves in the possession of wealth suddenly acquired, rush into extravagant habits of living, give expensive entertainments, and, as a natural consequence, sink suddenly into the obscurity from which they rose. But the satire takes a wider range. The poet jests at everything that comes in his way: authors, politicians, men of science, each is booked for a pleasantry; all are made to contribute to the expense of the entertainment set before the reader. The sting of his witticisms was not unfelt,

and I think was in some cases resented. People do not like to be laughed at, however pleasant it may be to those who laugh. At a later period Halleck saw the truth of what Pope says of ridicule—

“The muse may give thee but the gods must guide—”

and he published an edition of his “Fanny,” with notes, in which he took care to make a generous reparation to those whom he had offended. But “Fanny” is not all satire, and here and there in the poem are bursts of true lyrical enthusiasm.

Some comparison has been made between the “Fanny” of Halleck and the satirical poems of Byron. But Halleck was never cynical in his satire, and Byron was. I remember reading a remark made by Voltaire, on the “Dunciad” of Pope. “It wants gayety,” said the French critic. Gayety is the predominating quality of Halleck’s satire as hatred is that of the satire of Pope and Byron. Byron delighted in thinking how his victim would writhe under the blows he gave him. Halleck’s satire is the overflow of a mirthful temperament. He sees things in a ludicrous light, and laughs without reflecting that the object of his ridicule might not like the sport as well as himself.

In 1822 Halleck visited England and the continent of Europe. Of what he saw there I do not know that there is any record remaining, except his noble poem entitled “Burns” and the spirited and playful verses on Alnwick Castle.

It was in 1825, before Halleck’s reputation as a poet had reached its full growth, that I took up my residence in New York. I first met him at the hospitable board of Robert Sedgwick, Esq., and remember being struck with the brightness of his eye, which every now and then glittered with mirth, and with the graceful courtesy of his manners. Something was said of the length of time that he had lived in New York. “You are not from New England?” said our host. “I certainly am,” was Halleck’s reply. “I am from Connecti-

cut." "Is it possible?" exclaimed Mr. Sedgwick. "Well, you are the only New Englander that I ever saw in whom the tokens of his origin were not as plain as the mark set upon the forehead of Cain."

I was at that time one of the editors of a monthly magazine, the "New York Review," which was soon gathered to the limbo of extinct periodicals. Halleck brought to it his poem of "Marco Bozzaris," and in 1826 the lines entitled "Connecticut." The first of these poems became immediately a favorite, and was read by everybody who cared to read verses. I remember that at an evening party, at the house, I think, of Mr. Henry D. Sedgwick, it was recited by Mrs. Nichols, the same who not long afterward gave the public an English translation of Manzoni's "Promessi Sposi." She had a voice of great sweetness and power, capable of expressing every variety of emotion. She was in the midst of the poem, her thrilling voice the only sound in the room, and every ear intently listening to her accents, when suddenly she faltered—her memory had lost one of the lines. At that instant a clear and distinct voice, supplying the forgotten passage, was heard from a group in a corner of the room; it was the voice of the poet. With this aid she took up the recitation and went on triumphantly to the close, surrounded by an audience almost too deeply interested to applaud.

The poem entitled "Burns"—of which, let me say, I am not sure that the verses are not the finest in which one poet ever celebrated another—was contributed by Halleck, in 1827, to the "United States Review," which I bore a part in conducting. Halleck had been led, by his admiration of the poetry of Campbell, to pay a visit to the charming valley celebrated by that poet in his "Gertrude of Wyoming." In memory of this he wrote the lines entitled "Wyoming," which he handed me for publication in the same magazine. Before the "United States Review" shared the fate of its predecessor, there appeared the first printed collection of Halleck's poetical writings with the title of "Alnwick Castle and other Poems," published by G.



Carvill & Company, in 1827. I had the pleasure of saying to the readers of the "Review" how greatly I admired it.

At that time the Recorder of our city was appointed by the Governor of the State. Those who are not familiar with the judicial system of this State need, perhaps, to be told that the Recorder is not the keeper of the city archives, but the judge of an important criminal court. In 1828, and for some years before and afterward, the office was held by Mr. Richard Riker, a man of great practical shrewdness and the blandest manners, who was accused by some of adjusting his political opinions to the humors of the day, and was, therefore, deemed a proper subject of satire. One day I met Halleck, who said to me: "I have an epistle in verse from an old gentleman to the Recorder, which, if you please, I will send to you for the 'Evening Post.' It is all in my head, and you shall have it as soon as I have written it out." I should mention here that Halleck was in the habit of composing verses without the aid of pen and ink, keeping them in his memory, and retouching them at his leisure. In due time the "Epistle to the Recorder, by Thomas Castaly, Esq.," came to hand, was published in the "Evening Post," and was immediately read by the whole town. It seems to me one of the happiest of Halleck's satirical poems. The man in office, who was the subject of it, must have hardly known whether to laugh or be angry, and it was impossible, one would think, to be perfectly at ease when thus made the plaything of a poet and pelted with all manner of gibes, sly allusions, and ironical compliments, for the amusement of the public. Among its strokes of satire the epistle has passages of graceful poetry.\* Halleck, after the manner of the ancients, in leading his victim to the sacrifice, had hung its horns with garlands of flowers. The Recorder, however, is said to have borne this somewhat disrespectful, but by no means ill-natured, assault with the same apparent

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\* Among them none more graceful than the few lines in which, having averred that the fourteen wards of New York contained no less than thirty-seven bards,

composure with which he endured the coarser attacks of the newspapers.

In 1827 and the two following years, Dr. Bliss, a liberal-minded bookseller of this city, published annually, at the season of the winter holidays, a small volume of miscellanies entitled the "Talisman." They were written almost exclusively by three authors: Mr. Verplanck, eminent in our literature, and still fortunately spared to perform important public services; Robert C. Sands, a man of abounding wit, prematurely lost to the world of letters; and myself as the third contributor. For the volume which appeared in 1828 Halleck offered us one of his most remarkable poems, "Red Jacket," and I need not say how delighted we were to grace our collection by anything so vigorous, spirited, and original. It was illustrated by an engraving from a striking full-length portrait of the old Indian chief, by the elder Weir, then in the early maturity of his powers as an artist.

After the publication of these poems there follows an interval of thirty-five years which is almost a blank in Halleck's literary history. Between 1828 and 1863 he seems to have produced nothing worthy of note except the additions which he made to his poem of "Connecticut," in an edition published by Redfield, in 1852, and these are fully worthy of his reputation. It is almost unaccountable that an author, still in the highest strength of his faculties, who had written with

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he recalls but three: himself, the laureate of St. Tammany, Hillhouse, author of "Hadad," and

"Bryant, whose songs are thoughts that bless  
 The heart, its teachers and its joy,  
 As mothers blend with their caress  
 Lessons of truth and gentleness  
 And virtue for the listening boy.  
 Spring's lovelier flowers for many a day  
 Have blossomed in his wandering way—  
 Beings of beauty and decay,  
 They slumber in their autumn tomb;  
 But those that graced his own Green River,  
 And wreathed the lattice of his home,  
 Charmed by his song from mortal doom,  
 Bloom on, and will bloom on forever."

such acceptance, should not have been tempted to write more for a public which he knew was eager to read whatever came from his pen. "When an author begins to be quoted," said Halleck once to me, "he is already famous." Halleck found that he was quoted, but he was not a man to go on writing because the world seemed to expect it. It was only in 1863, when he was already seventy-three years of age, that he wrote for the "New York Ledger" his "Young America," a poem which, though not by any means to be placed among his best, contains, as Mr. Cozzens, in a paper read before this Society, justly remarks, passages which remind us of his earlier vigor and grace.

Yet, if in that interval he did not occupy himself with poetic composition, he gave much of his leisure to the poetry of others. I have never known any one, I think, who seemed to take so deep a delight in the poetry that perfectly suited his taste. He transcribed it; he read it over and over; he dwelt upon it until every word of it became engraven upon his memory; he recited it with glistening eyes and a voice and frame tremulous with emotion. Mr. F. S. Cozzens has sent me a scrap of paper on which he had copied a passage of eight lines of verse, and under them had written these sentences: "I find these verses in an album. Do you know the writer? I would give a hundred pounds sterling, payable out of any money in my treasury not otherwise appropriated, to be capable of writing the two last lines."

Halleck loved to ramble in the country, for the most part, I believe, alone. Once he did me the favor to make me his companion. It was while the region from Hoboken to Fort Lee was yet but thinly sprinkled with habitations, and the cliffs which overlook the river on its western bank had lain in forest from the time that Hendrick Hudson entered the great stream which bears his name. We were on a slow-going steamer, which we left at the landing of Bull's Ferry. "Do you not go on with us, Mr. Halleck?" asked the captain. "No," was the answer; "I am in a hurry." We walked on to Fort

Lee, where we made a short stop at the house of a publican named Reynolds, who is mentioned in Duyckinck's memoir, an English radical, a man of no little mother wit, and a deep, strong voice, which he greatly loved to hear. Halleck had known him when he exercised his vocation in town, and took pleasure, I think, in hearing his ready rejoinders to the poet's praises of a monarchy and an Established Church; and Reynolds, proud of the acquaintance of so eminent a man as Halleck, received him with demonstrations of delight. We returned over the heights of Weehawken to look at the magnificent view so finely celebrated by Halleck in his "Fanny," with its glorious bay, its beautiful isles, its grand headlands, and its busy cities, the murmur of which was heard blending with the dash of waves at the foot of the cliff.

I have mentioned that Halleck was early a clerk in the office of Mr. Barker. He was afterward employed in the same capacity by John Jacob Astor, the richest man of his day in New York, and exceedingly sagacious and fortunate in his enterprises. His term of employment by Mr. Astor came, however, to an end; and I think that he was then compelled by the narrowness of his means to practice a rigid economy. He was of too independent a spirit to allow himself to be drawn into a situation which would incline him to keep out of the way of a creditor. He was an excellent accountant; I have a letter from one of his friends, speaking of his skill in difficult and intricate computations, in which Mr. Astor employed him with confidence. Perhaps the habit of exactness in this vocation led to exactness in his dealings with all men. His example is an encouraging one for poets and wits, since it teaches that a lively fancy and practical good sense do not necessarily stand in each other's way. Somebody has called prudence a rascally virtue, and I have heard Halleck himself rail at it, and refer to Benjamin Franklin as a man who had acquired a false reputation by his dexterity in taking care of his own interests. But Halleck did not disdain to practice the virtue which he decried, and he knew, as well as Franklin



himself, that prudence, in the proper sense of the term, is wisdom applied to the ordinary affairs of life; that it includes forecast, one of the highest operations of the intellect, and the due adjustment of means to ends, without which a man is useless both to himself and to society, except as a blunderer by whose example others may be warned.

I think it was some time after he had given up his clerkship that Mr. Astor left him a small legacy, to which the son, Mr. William B. Astor, made a liberal addition. Halleck then withdrew from the city, in which he had passed forty years of his life, to Guilford, his native place, in which the Eliots, his ancestors on the mother's side, had dwelt for nearly two centuries. Here, in the household of an unmarried sister, older than himself and now living, he passed his later years among his books, with some infirmities of body, but with intellectual faculties still vigorous, his wit as keen and lively as when he wrote his "Epistle to the Recorder," and his delight in the verses of his favorite poets and in the happy expression of generous sentiments as deeply felt and as easily awakened as when he wrote his noble poem on "Woman."

It was not far from the time of which I speak that some of Halleck's personal and literary friends gave him a dinner at the rooms of the club called the Century. It fell to me to preside, and in toasting our guest I first spoke, in such terms as I was able to command, of the merits of his poetry, as occupying a place in our literature like that of the poetry of Horace in the literature of ancient Rome. I dwelt upon the playfulness and grace of his satire and the sweetness and fervor of his lyrical vein.\* Halleck answered very happily:

"I do not rise to speak," he said, "for if I were to stand up

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\* This little speech was found among Mr. Bryant's papers, written out, and a part of it is here given:

"If, gentlemen, by any possibility we could have among us for a time, in full life, the Roman satirist and lyrist, Quintus Horatius Flaccus, we should forego no fitting manner of expressing our admiration for his genius. We should give him dinners private and dinners public; we should have poetics, symposiums, festivities of all

I could say nothing. I must keep my seat and talk to you without ceremony." And then he went on, speaking modestly and charmingly of his own writings. I cannot, at this distance of time, recollect how he treated the subject, but I well remember that he spoke so well that we would willingly have listened to him the whole evening.

It is now five-and-thirty years, the life of one of the generations of mankind, since I contributed to a weekly periodical, published in this city, an estimate of the poetical genius of Halleck. Of course, nobody now remembers having read it, and, as it was written after his most remarkable poems had been given to the public, and as I could say nothing different of them now, I will, with the leave of the audience, make it a part of this paper.

"Halleck is one of the most generally admired of all our poets, and he possesses, what no other does, a decided local popularity. He is the favorite poet of the city of New York, where his name is cherished with a peculiar fondness and enthusiasm. It furnishes a standing and ever-ready allusion to all who would speak of American literature, and is familiar in the mouths of hundreds who would be seriously puzzled if asked to name any other American poet. The verses of others may be found in the hands of persons who possess some tincture of polite literature—young men pursuing their studies, or young ladies with whom the age of romance is not yet past ;

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kinds in his honor. Gentlemen, with a dead Horace you can do nothing—I suppose you are all aware of that ; but the living Horace is here—the Horace of this great, opulent, populous, luxuriant Rome of the Western Hemisphere. Let us do him honor. His numbers are as sweet as those of his predecessor, his wit as keen, as brilliant, and as playful, the spirit of his serious odes even more fiery and enthusiastic.

"I only wish he had written as much as Horace, and Horace was no voluminous author. I wish that, instead of two or three satires, he had given us twenty or thirty, and instead of one book of odes, five or six, and three or four epodes after them. Let us, however, try to be content with our good fortune in what we have. We do not repine that diamonds are not more plenty ; we can value them the more for their rarity. We do not rejoice the less in the brightness and beauty of the evening star because on a clear evening the whole expanse of heaven is not studded with such."

but those of Halleck are read by people of the humblest degree of literary pretension, and are equally admired in Bond Street and the Bowery. There are numbers who regularly attribute to his pen every anonymous poem in the newspapers in which an attempt at humor is evident, who 'know him by his style,' and whose delight at the supposed wit is heightened almost to transport by the self-complacency of having made the discovery. His reputation, however, is not injured by these mistakes, for the verses by which they are occasioned are soon forgotten, and his fame rests firmly on the compositions which are known to be his.

"This high degree of local popularity has for one of its causes the peculiar subjects of many of the poems of Halleck, relating, as they do, to persons and things and events with which everybody in New York is more or less acquainted; objects which are constantly before the eyes, and matters which are the talk of every fireside. The poems written by him in conjunction with his friend Doctor Drake for the 'Evening Post,' in the year 1819, under the signature of Croaker & Co., and the satirical poem of 'Fanny,' are examples of this happy use of the familiar topics of the day. He will pardon this allusion to works which he has never publicly acknowledged, but which are attributed to him by general consent, since, without them, we might miss some of the peculiar characteristics of his genius.

"Halleck's humorous poems are marked by an uncommon ease of versification, a natural flow and sweetness of language, and a careless, Horatian playfulness and felicity of jest, not, however, imitated from Horace or any other writer. He finds abundant matter for mirth in the peculiar state of our society, in the heterogeneous population of the city—

'Of every race the mingled swarm,'

in the affectations of newly assumed gentility, the ostentation of wealth, the pretensions of successful quackery, and the awkward attempt to blend with the habits of trade an imitation of

the manners of the most luxurious and fastidious nobility in the world—the nobility of England. Sometimes, in the midst of a strain of harmonious diction, and soft and tender imagery—so soft and tender that you willingly yield yourself up to the feeling of pathos or to the sense of beauty it inspires—he surprises you with an irresistible stroke of ridicule,

‘As if himself he did disdain,  
And mock the form he did but feign’;

as if he looked with no regard upon the fair poetical vision he had raised, and took pleasure in showing the reader that it was but a cheat. Sometimes the poet, with that aerial facility which is his peculiar endowment, accumulates graceful and agreeable images in a strain of irony so fine that, did not the subject compel you to receive it as irony, you would take it for a beautiful passage of serious poetry—so beautiful that you are tempted to regret that he is not in earnest, and that phrases so exquisitely chosen, and poetic coloring so brilliant, should be employed to embellish subjects to which they do not properly belong. At other times he produces the effect of wit by dexterous allusions to contemporaneous events, introduced as illustrations of the main subject, with all the unconscious gracefulness of the most animated and familiar conversation. He delights in ludicrous contrasts produced by bringing the nobleness of the ideal world into comparison with the homeliness of the actual; the beauty and grace of nature with the awkwardness of art. He venerates the past and laughs at the present. He looks at them through a medium which lends to the former the charm of romance, and exaggerates the deformity of the latter.

“Halleck’s poetry, whether serious or sprightly, is remarkable for the melody of the numbers. It is not the melody of monotonous and strictly regular measurement. His verse is constructed to please an ear naturally fine and accustomed to a wide range of metrical modulation. It is as different from that painfully balanced versification, that uniform succession



of iambics, closing the sense with the couplet, which some writers practice, and some critics praise, as the note of the thrush is unlike that of the cuckoo. Halleck is familiar with those general rules and principles which are the basis of metrical harmony; and his own unerring taste has taught him the exceptions which a proper attention to variety demands. He understands that the rivulet is made musical by obstructions in its channel. You will find in no poet passages which flow with a more sweet and liquid smoothness; but he knows very well that to make this smoothness perceived, and to prevent it from degenerating into monotony, occasional roughnesses must be interposed.

“But it is not only in humorous or playful poetry that Halleck excels. He has fire and tenderness and manly vigor, and his serious poems are equally admirable with his satirical. What martial lyric can be finer than the verses on the death of Marco Bozzaris? We are made spectators of the slumbers of the Turkish oppressor, dreaming of ‘victory in his guarded tent’; we see the Greek warrior ranging his true-hearted band of Suliotes in the forest shades; we behold them throwing themselves into the camp; we hear the shout, the groan, the sabre stroke, the death shot falling thick and fast, and, in the midst of all, the voice of Bozzaris bidding them to strike boldly for God and their native land. The struggle is long and fierce; the ground is piled with Moslem slain; the Greeks are at length victorious; and as the brave chief falls, bleeding from every vein, he hears the proud huzza of his surviving comrades, announcing that the field is won, and he closes his eyes in death,

‘Calmly, as to a night’s repose.’

“This picture of the battle is followed by a dirge over the slain hero—a glorious outpouring of lyrical eloquence, worthy to have been chanted by Pindar or Tyrtaeus over one of his ancestors. There is in this poem a freedom, a daring, a fervency, a rapidity, an affluence of thick-coming fancies, that

make it seem like an inspired improvisation, as if the thoughts had been divinely breathed into the mind of the poet, and uttered themselves, voluntarily, in poetic numbers. We think, as we read it, of

‘—the large utterance of the early gods.’

“If an example is wanted of Halleck’s capacity for subjects of a gentler nature, let the reader turn to the verses written in the album of an unknown lady, entitled ‘Woman.’ In a few lines he has gathered around the name of woman a crowd of delightful associations—all the graces of her sex, delightful pictures of domestic happiness and domestic virtues, gentle affections, pious cares, smiles and tears, that bless and heal,

‘And earth’s lost paradise restored,  
In the green bower of home.’

“‘Red Jacket’ is a poem of a yet different kind ; a poem of manly vigor of sentiment, noble versification, strong expression, and great power in the delineation of character—the whole dashed off with a great appearance of freedom, and delightfully tempered with the satirical vein of the author. Some British periodical, lately published, contains a criticism on American literature, in which it is arrogantly asserted that our poets have made nothing of the Indian character, and that Campbell’s ‘Outalissi’ is altogether the best portraiture of the mind and manners of an American savage which is to be found in English verse. The critic must have spoken without much knowledge of his subject. He certainly could never have read Halleck’s ‘Red Jacket.’ Campbell’s ‘Outalissi’ is very well. He is ‘a stoic of the woods,’ and nothing more ; an Epictetus put into a blanket and leggins, and translated to the forests of Pennsylvania ; but he is no Indian. ‘Red Jacket’ is the very savage of our wilderness. ‘Outalissi’ is a fancy sketch of few lineaments. He is brave, faithful, and affectionate, concealing these qualities under an exterior of insensibility. ‘Red Jacket’ has the spirit and variety of a portrait

from nature. He has all the savage virtues and savage vices, and the rude and strong qualities of mind which belong to a warrior, a chief, and an orator of the aboriginal stock. He is set before us with sinewy limbs, gentle voice, motions graceful as a bird's in air, an air of command inspiring deference; brave, cunning, cruel, vindictive, eloquent, skilful to dissemble, and terrible, when the moment of dissembling is past, as the wild beasts or the tempests of his own wilderness.

"A poem which, without being the best he has written, unites many of the different qualities of Halleck's manner, is that entitled '*Alnwick Castle*.' The rich imagery, the airy melody of verse, the grace of language which belong to his serious poems, are to be found in the first half of the poem, which relates to the beautiful scenery and venerable traditions of the old home of the Percys; while the author's vein of gay humor, fertile in mirthful allusion, appears in the conclusion, in which he descends to the homely and peaceful occupations of its present proprietors.

"Whoever undertakes the examination of Halleck's poetical character will naturally wish for a greater number of examples from which to collect an estimate of his powers. He has given us only samples of what he can do. His verses are like passages of some noble choral melody, heard in the brief interval between the opening and shutting of the doors of a temple. Why does he not more frequently employ the powers with which he is so eminently gifted? He should know that such faculties are invigorated and enlarged, and rendered obedient to the will by exercise. He need not be afraid of not equalling what he has already written. He will excel himself if he applies his powers, with an earnest and resolute purpose, to the work which justice to his own fame demands of him. There are heroes of our own history who deserve to be embalmed for immortality in strains as noble as those which celebrate the death of Marco Bozzaris; and Halleck has shown how powerfully he can appeal to our sense of patriotism in his '*Field of the Grounded Arms*,' a poem which has only

been prevented from being universally popular by the peculiar kind of verse in which it is written."

This is what I wrote of Halleck thirty-five years ago. Since that time the causes which gave him a local popularity in New York have, in a great measure, ceased to exist. A new generation has arisen to whom the persons and most of the things which were the objects of his playful satire are known but by tradition. Eminent poets have appeared in our country and acquired fame among us, and divided with him the attention and admiration of the public. His best things, however, are still admired, I think, as much as ever in the city which, for the greater part of his life, he made his abode.

Of his literary habits less is known than of those of most literary men of his time. During the latter years of his life, and, I think, for some time previous, he manifested but little inclination to go into society, on account, I believe, of a difficulty of hearing which made its appearance in middle life, and increased somewhat as he grew older. He did not like to make those with whom he was talking repeat what had been said, and often ingeniously contrived to keep up a spirited conversation when he was obliged to guess the words addressed to him. His leisure, we may presume—a good deal of it, at least—was studiously passed, since his conversation showed that his reading was extensive, and his opinions of authors were always ready, and promptly and decidedly expressed. I remember hearing him say that he could think of no more fortunate lot in life than the possession of a well-stored library, with ample leisure for reading. He was not unskilled in the modern languages of Europe, and once he said to me that he had learned Portuguese in order that he might read the "*Lusiad*" in the original. That poem, in Mickle's translation, is as little like the work of Camoens as Pope's *Iliad* is like the *Iliad* of Homer. Mickle has made it declamatory where Camoens is simple, and all the rapidity of the narrative is lost in the diffuse verses of the translator.

Halleck was fortunate in a retentive verbal memory, and



recited fine passages from other poets with great spirit and feeling. He could not, as he remarked, remember what he did not like, and only chose to dwell upon such as combined a certain melody of versification with beauty of thought. "There is no poetry," he was wont to say, "without music. It must have the grace of rhythm and cadence." He was not quite satisfied with much of the poetry of the present day. "He thought," says Mr. Tuckerman, "that much of current verse was the offspring of ingenuity rather than inspiration—that sentiment often lost its wholesome fervor in diluted or perverse utterance." I too have heard him object to the elaborately beautiful verse of a popular English poet, that it was not manly, and to that of an English poetess of great and original genius, that it was not womanly. He delighted in great or affecting thoughts given with a transparent clearness of expression, and where he found obscurity, vagueness, or harshness, he withheld his admiration.

He was fond of maintaining unexpected opinions, which he often did with much ingenuity and art. He argued in favor of a monarchy and an Established Church. "The ship of state," he used to say, "must be governed and navigated, like any other ship, without consulting the crew. What would become of the stanchest bark in a gale if the captain were obliged to call all hands together and say: 'All you who are in favor of taking in sail will please to say Aye?'" Before he left New York he began to declare his preference of the Roman Catholic Church over other denominations of Christians, though his manner of stating the argument in its favor might not perfectly satisfy its friends. "It is a church," he was wont to say, "which saves you a deal of trouble. You leave your salvation to the care of a class of men trained and set apart for the purpose; they have the charge both of your belief and your practice, and, as long as you satisfy them on these points, you need give yourself no anxiety about either." It was difficult always to be certain how far he was in earnest when he talked on these subjects.

On one occasion his habit of maintaining unusual opinions in a manner between jest and earnest had a consequence which his friends regretted. Seth Cheney, the estimable artist who died in 1856, drew portraits of the size of life, in crayon, using no colors, with extraordinary skill in transferring to the sheet before him the finest and most elevated expression of which the countenance of his sitter was capable. He always wrought with a certain creative enthusiasm, like that of the poet. His best portraits, at the same time that they are good likenesses, have something angelic in their aspect. It is told of Dana the poet, that, after looking with wonder at one of these drawings, the likeness of a lady more eminent for goodness than for beauty, he said: "It is our friend as she will be at the resurrection." Cheney could never bring himself to receive as sitters those for whom he did not entertain a decided respect, and for that reason declined to take the likeness of certain men distinguished in public life. Halleck once sat to him, but the artist found the frame of mind which he brought to his task disturbed by the free and sportive manner in which his sitter spoke of certain grave matters, and one morning, when Halleck came as usual, Cheney said to him: "I have finished your likeness." "You have been expeditious," said the poet. "Yes," returned Cheney, "I put it in the fire this morning." That was the last of Halleck's sittings to Cheney; but, if the poet had not jested so unseasonably, we should probably have had one of Cheney's finest heads, for Halleck, with his beaming countenance, was a capital subject for such an artist.

Halleck was much besieged, as authors of note, particularly poets, are apt to be, with applications from persons desirous of appearing in print, to read their manuscript verses and give his opinion of their merits. I have heard him say that he never turned them away with an unfriendly answer. I suppose that, regarding poets as a sensitive tribe, keenly alive to unfavorable criticism, he spared them as much as he could, though I doubt very much whether they obtained from him

any opinion worth the trouble they had taken. If what I write should fall under the eye of any persons of either sex poetically inclined and ambitious of renown, I would strongly advise them against sending their verses to a poet for his judgment. In the first place, it does not follow that because he passes for a poet he is therefore a competent critic; in the second place, they may be sure that he will have little time to look at their verses; and, thirdly, he will naturally be so desirous to treat their case tenderly that his opinion will be of little value. I have always counselled persons of this class, if they *must* come before the public, not to seek the opinion of individuals, but to get their verses printed in the periodicals that will accept them, and thus appeal to the reading world at large, which is the only proper judge of poetic merit.

The conversation of Halleck was remarkably sprightly and pointed. If there had been any friend to take note of what he said, a volume of his pithy and pleasant sayings might have been compiled, as entertaining as anything of the kind which has appeared since Boswell's "Johnson." His letters were, like his familiar talk, full of playful turns and witty allusions.

He reached a good old age, dying, on the 19th of November, 1867, at the age of seventy-seven. Toward the latter part of his life he was subject to a painful disease, from which he seems to have suffered only in occasional paroxysms, since it was but a few days before his death that he wrote to his friend Mr. Verplanck, saying that he would like to meet his old friends in New York at dinner at some old-fashioned place, such as Windust's, and that he would like his younger friend, Mr. F. S. Cozzens, to make the arrangements for the purpose. His wish, so far as depended on his friends here, was about to be fulfilled, when in the midst of their preparations they were shocked by the news of his death.

He was spared the suffering which is the lot of many to whom, in their departure from this life, are appointed long days and nights of pain. To him might be applied with tolerable truth the lines of Milton:

"So shalt thou live, till like ripe fruit thou drop  
 Into thy mother's lap, or be with ease  
 Gathered, not harshly plucked, for death mature."

But the lines which follow soon after these do not describe the old age of Halleck:

"—and for the air of youth  
 Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign  
 A melancholy damp of cold and dry  
 To weigh thy spirits down,"

since he retained to the last the vivacious faculties and quick emotions of his earlier life. His age was not unvisited by the warnings which usually accompany that season of life, but his death was easy, and his last hours were solaced by the affectionate cares of that sister to whose side he had returned when he saw the shadows of the hills lengthen across his path in the evening sunshine.

When I look back upon Halleck's literary life, I cannot help thinking that, if his death had happened forty years earlier, his life would have been regarded as a bright morning prematurely overcast. Yet Halleck's literary career may be said to have ended then. All that will hand down his name to future years had already been produced. Who shall say to what cause his subsequent literary inaction was owing? It was not the decline of his powers; his brilliant conversation showed that it was not. Was it, then, indifference to fame? Was it because he put a humble estimate on what he had written, and therefore resolved to write no more? Was it because he feared lest what he might write should be unworthy of the reputation he had been so fortunate as to acquire?

I have my own way of accounting for his literary silence in the latter half of his life. One of the resemblances which he bore to Horace consisted in the length of time in which he kept his poems by him that he might give them the last and happiest touches. Having composed his poems without committing them to paper, and retaining them in his faithful mem-



ory, he revised them in the same manner, murmuring them to himself in his solitary moments, recovering the enthusiasm with which they were first conceived, and in this state of mind heightening the beauty of the thought or of the expression. I remember that once, in crossing Washington Park, I saw Halleck before me, and quickened my pace to overtake him. As I drew near, I heard him crooning to himself what seemed to be lines of verse, and, as he threw back his hands in walking, I perceived that they quivered with the feeling of the passage he was reciting. I instantly checked my pace and fell back, out of reverence for the mood of inspiration which seemed to be upon him, and fearful lest I should intercept the birth of a poem destined to be the delight of thousands of readers.

In this way I suppose Halleck to have attained the gracefulness of his diction and the airy melody of his numbers. In this way I believe that he wrought up his verses to that transparent clearness of expression which causes the thought to be seen through them without any interposing dimness, so that the thought and the phrase seem one, and the thought enters the mind like a beam of light. I suppose that, Halleck's time being taken up by the tasks of his vocation, he naturally lost by degrees the habit of composing in this manner, and that he found it so necessary to the perfection of what he wrote, that he adopted no other in its place.

Whatever was the reason that Halleck ceased so early to write, let us congratulate ourselves that he wrote at all. Great authors often overlay and almost smother their own fame by the voluminousness of their writings. So great is their multitude, and so rich is the literature of our language, that, for frequent reading, we are obliged to content ourselves with mere selections from the works of the best and most beloved of our poets, even those who have not written much. It is only a few of their works that dwell and live in the general mind. Gray, for example, wrote little, and of that little, only one short poem, his "Elegy," can be fairly said to survive in

the public admiration, and that poem I have sometimes heard called the most popular in our language.

In what I have said it will be seen that I have principally limited myself to what I personally knew of Halleck. I merely designed to add my humble tribute to those which sorrowing hands had laid on his grave. Our friend is gone, and to those of us who knew him the world seems the dimmer for his departure. The light of that bright eye is quenched; its socket is filled with dust; that voice is heard no more in lively sallies of wit, or repeating in tones full of emotion the verses of the poets whom he loved. When such a man, a man of so bright and active an intellect, dies, the short period of our existence on earth, even when prolonged to old age, presses sadly on our minds, and we instinctively seek relief in the doctrine of the soul's immortality. We ask ourselves how that conscious intelligence, of which the bodily organs are manifestly so imperfect a medium, can be resolved, along with them, into the grosser elements of which they are compounded; how a mind so creative, so keenly alive to the beauty of God's works, and so wonderfully dexterous in combining the materials which these works supply into forms which have in them somewhat of that transcendent beauty, can fail to partake of the endless existence of the Divinity whom it thus imitates. We connect the creative in man with the imperishable and undying, and reverently trust the spirit to the compassionate cares of Him who breathed it into the human frame.

## GULIAN CROMMELIN VERPLANCK.\*

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THE life of him in honor of whose memory we are assembled was prolonged to so late a period, and to the last was so full of usefulness, that it almost seemed a permanent part of the organization and the active movement of society here. His departure has left a sad vacuity in the framework which he helped to uphold and adorn. It is as if one of the columns which support a massive building had been suddenly taken away; the sight of the space which it once occupied troubles us, and the mind wearies itself in the unavailing wish to restore it to its place.

In what I am about to say, I shall put together some notices of the character, the writings, and the services of this eminent man, but the portraiture which I shall draw will be but a miniature. To do it full justice a larger canvas would be required than the one I propose to take. He acted in so many important capacities; he was connected in so many ways with our literature, our legislation, our jurisprudence, our public education, and public charities, that it would require a volume adequately to set forth the obligations we owe to the exertion of his fine faculties for the general good.

Gulian Crommelin Verplanck was born in Wall Street, in the city of New York, on the 6th of August, 1786. The house

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\* A discourse on his life, character, and writings, delivered before the New York Historical Society, May 17, 1870.

in which he was born was a large yellow mansion, standing on the spot on which the Assay Office has since been built. A little beyond this street, so that it was but a step into the country, lay the island of New York in all its original beauty. His father, Daniel Crommelin Verplanck, was a respectable citizen of the old stock of colonists from Holland, who for several terms was a member of Congress, and whom I remember as a short, stout old gentleman, commonly called Judge Verplanck, from having been a judge of the County Court of Dutchess. In that county he resided during the latter years of his life on the patrimonial estate, where the son, ever since I knew him, was in the habit of passing a part of the summer. It had been in the family of the Verplancks ever since their ancestor, Gulian Verplanck, with Francis Rombout, in 1683, purchased it, with other lands, of the Wappinger Indians for a certain amount of money and merchandise, specified in a deed signed by the Sachem Sakoraghuck and other chiefs, the spelling of whose names seems to defy pronounciation. The two purchasers afterward divided this domain, and to the Verplancks was assigned a tract which they have ever since held.

This fine old estate has a long western border on the Hudson, and extends easterly for four or five miles to the village of Fishkill. About half a mile from the great river stands the family mansion, among its ancient groves—a large stone building of one story when I saw it, with a sharp roof and dormer windows, besides its old-fashioned and well-stocked garden. A winding path leads down to the river's edge, through an ancient forest which has stood there ever since Hendrick Hudson navigated the river bearing his name, and centuries before. This mansion was the country retreat of Mr. Verplanck from the time that I first knew him ; and here it was that his grandfather on the paternal side, Samuel Verplanck, passed much of his time during our Revolutionary War, in which, although he took no share in political measures, his inclinations were on the side of the mother country.

This Samuel Verplanck, by a custom which seems not to



have become obsolete in his time, was betrothed, when but seven years old, to his cousin, Judith Crommelin, the daughter of a wealthy banker of the Huguenot stock in Amsterdam. When the young gentleman was of the proper age he was sent to make the tour of Europe and bring home his bride. He was married in the banker's great stone house, which stood beside a fair Dutch garden, with a wide marble entrance-hall, the counting-room on one side of it, and the drawing-room, bright with gilding, on the other. When the grandson in after years visited Amsterdam, the mansion, which had often been described to him by his grandmother, had to him quite a familiar aspect.

The lady from Amsterdam was particularly accomplished, and versed not only in several modern languages, but in Greek and Latin, speaking fluently the Latin of which the Colloquies of her great countryman, Erasmus, furnished so rich a store of phrases for ordinary dialogue. Her conversation is said to have been uncommonly brilliant and her society much sought. During the Revolutionary War her house was open to the British officers, General Howe, and others, accomplished men, of whom she had many anecdotes to relate to her grandson when he came under her care. For the greater part of this time her husband remained at the country seat in Fishkill, quietly occupied with his books and the care of his estate. Meantime, she wrote anxious letters to her father, in Amsterdam, which were answered in neat French. The banker consoled his daughter by saying that "Mr. Samuel Verplanck was a man so universally known and honored, both for his integrity and scholarly attainments, that in the end all would be well." This proved true; the extensive estate at Fishkill was never confiscated, and its owner was left unmolested.

On the mother's side, our friend had an ancestry of quite different political views. His grandfather, William Samuel Johnson, of Stratford, in Connecticut, was one of the revolutionary fathers. Before the Revolution he was the agent of Connecticut in England; when it broke out he took a zealous

part in the cause of the revolted colonies; he was a delegate to Congress from his State when Congress sat in New York, and he aided in framing the Constitution of the United States. Afterward he was President of Columbia College from the year 1787 to the year 1800, when, resigning the post, he returned to Stratford, where he died, in 1819, at the age of ninety-two. His father, the great-grandfather of the subject of this memoir, was Dr. Samuel Johnson, of Stratford, one of the finest American scholars of his day, and the first President of Columbia College, which, however, he left after nine years, to return and pass a serene old age in Stratford. He had been a Congregational minister in Connecticut, but, by reading the works of Barrow and other eminent divines of the Anglican Church, he became a convert to that church, went to England, and, taking orders, he returned to introduce its ritual into Connecticut. He was the friend of Bishop Berkeley, whose arm-chair was preserved as an heirloom in his family. When in England, he saw Pope, who gave him cuttings from his Twickenham willow. These he brought from the banks of the Thames, and planted on the wilder borders of his own beautiful river, the Housatonic, which at Stratford enters the Sound. They were, probably, the progenitors of all the weeping willows which are seen in this part of the country, where they rapidly grow to a size which I have never seen them attain in any other part of the world.

The younger of these Dr. Johnsons—for they both received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Oxford—had a daughter Elizabeth, who married Daniel Crommelin Verplanck, the son of Samuel Verplanck, and the only fruit of their marriage was the subject of this memoir. The fair-haired young mother was a frequent visitor with her child in Stratford, where, under the willow-trees from Twickenham, as appears from some of her letters, he learned to walk. She died when he was but three years old, leaving the boy to the care of his grandmother, by whom he was indulgently yet carefully reared.

The grandmother is spoken of as a lively little lady, often seen walking up Wall Street, dressed in pink satin and in dainty high-heeled shoes, with a quaint jewelled watch swinging from her waist. Wall Street was then the fashionable quarter, the city, still in its embryo state, extending but a little way above it; it was full of dwelling-houses, with here and there a church, which has long since disappeared. Over that region of the metropolis where mammon is worshipped six days out of seven, there now broods on Sunday a sepulchral silence; but then the walks were thronged with church-goers. The boy was his grandmother's constant companion. He was trained by her to love books and study, to which, however, he seems to have had a natural and inherited inclination. It is said that at a very tender age she taught him to declaim, standing on a table, passages from Latin authors, and rewarded him with hot pound-cake. Another story is, that she used to put sugar-plums near his bedside, to be at hand in case he should take a fancy to them in the night. But, as he was not spoiled by indulgence, it is but fair to conclude that her method of educating him was tempered by firmness on proper occasions—a quality somewhat rare in grandmothers. A letter from one of her descendants playfully says:

“It is a picture to think of her, seated at a marvellous Dutch bureau, now in possession of her great-granddaughters, which is filled with a complexity of small and mysterious drawers, talking to the child, while her servant built the powdered tower on her head, or hung the diamond rings in her ears. Very likely at such times the child was thrusting his little fingers into the rouge-pot, or making havoc with the powder; and perhaps she knew no better way to bring him to order than to tell him of many a fright of her own in the war; or she may have gone further back in history, and told the boy how she and his Huguenot ancestors fled from France when the bad King Louis forbade every form of worship but his own.”

Dr. Johnson, the grandfather of young Verplanck on the

mother's side, came from Stratford to be President of Columbia College the year after his grandson was born. To him, in an equal degree with his grandmother, we must give the credit of bringing forward the precocious boy in his early studies. I have diligently inquired what school he attended, and who were his teachers, but can hear of no others. His father had married again, and to the lively Huguenot lady was left the almost entire charge of the boy. He was a born scholar; he took to books as other boys take to marbles; and the lessons which he received in the household sufficed to prepare him for entering college, when yet a mere child, at eleven years of age. He took his first degree four years afterward, in 1801, one year after his maternal grandfather had returned to Stratford. To that place he very frequently resorted in his youth, and there, in the well-stored and well-arranged library, he pursued the studies he loved. The tradition is that he conned his Greek lessons lying flat on the floor with his thumb in his mouth, and the fingers of the other hand employed in twisting a lock of the brown hair on his forehead. He took no pleasure in fishing or in hunting; I doubt whether he ever let off a fowling-piece or drew a trout from the brook in his life. He was fond of younger children, and would recreate himself in play with his little relatives, but was no visitor to other families. His contemporaries, Washington Irving, James K. Paulding, and Gouverneur Kemble, had their amusements and frolics, in which he took no part. According to Mr. Kemble, the elder men of the time held up to the youths the example of young Verplanck, so studious and accomplished, and so ready with every kind of knowledge, and withal of such faultless habits, as a model for their imitation.

I have said that his relatives on the mother's side were of a different political school from his high tory grandmother. From them he would hear of the inalienable rights of the people, and the duty, under certain circumstances, of revolution; from her he would hear of the obligation of loyalty and obedience. The Johnsons would speak of the patriotism, the



wisdom, and the services of Franklin; the grandmother of the virtues and accomplishments of Cornwallis. The boy, of course, had to choose between these different sides, and he chose the side of his country and of the people.

I think that I perceive in these circumstances how it was that the mind of Verplanck was educated to that independence of judgment and that self-reliance which in after life so eminently distinguished it. He never adopted an opinion for the reason that it had been adopted by another. On some points—on more, I think, than is usual with most men—he was content not to decide, but when he formed an opinion it was his own. He had no hesitation in differing from others if he saw reason; indeed, he sometimes showed that he rather liked to differ, or chose at least, by questioning their opinions, to intimate that they were prematurely formed. Another result of the peculiar political education which I have described was the fairness with which he judged of the characters and motives of men who were not of his party. I saw much, very much, of him while he was a member of Congress, when political animosities were at their fiercest, and I must say that I never knew a party man who had less party rancor, or who was more ready to acknowledge in his political opponents the good qualities which they really possessed.

After taking his degree he read law in the office of Josiah Ogden Hoffman, an eminent member of the New York bar, much, esteemed in social life, whose house was the resort of the best company in New York. His first public address, a Fourth of July oration, was delivered when he was eighteen years of age. It was printed, but no copy of it is now to be found. In due time he was admitted to the bar, and opened an office for the practice of law in New York. A letter from Dr. Moore, formerly President of Columbia College, relates that Verplanck and himself took an office together on the east side of Pearl Street, opposite to Hanover Square. "Little business as I had then," proceeds the Doctor, "he seemed to have still less. Indeed, I am not aware that he had, or

cared to have, any legal business whatever. He spent much of his time out of the office, and was not very studious when within ; but it was evident that he read, or had read elsewhere, to good purpose ; for though I read more Greek than law, and thought myself studious, I had occasion to discover more than once that he was a better Grecian than I, and could enlighten my ignorance." From other sources I learn that in his legal studies he delighted in the reports of law cases in Norman French, that he was fond of old French literature, and read Rabelais in the perplexing French of the original. It is mentioned in some accounts of his life that he was elected in 1811 to the New York House of Assembly by a party called the Malcontents, but I have not had the means of verifying this account, nor am I able to discover what were the objects for which the party called Malcontents was formed. In this year an incident occurred of more importance to him than his election to the Assembly.

On the 8th of August, 1811, the Annual Commencement of Columbia College was held in Trinity Church. Among those who were to receive the degree of Bachelor of Arts was a young man named Stevenson, who had composed an oration to be delivered on the platform. It contained some passages of a political nature, insisting on the duty of a representative to obey the will of his constituents. Political parties were at that time much exasperated against each other, and Dr. Wilson, of the College, to whom the oration was submitted, acting, it was thought, at the suggestion of Dr. John Mason, the eloquent divine, who was then Provost of the College, struck out the passages in question, and directed that they should be omitted in the delivery. Stevenson spoke them notwithstanding, and was then privately informed by one of the professors that his degree would be denied him. Yet when the diplomas were delivered he mounted the platform with the other graduates and demanded the degree of Dr. Mason. It was refused because of his disobedience. Mr. Hugh Maxwell, afterward eminent as an advocate, sprang

upon the platform and appealed to the audience against this denial of what he claimed to be the right of Stevenson. Great confusion followed, shouts, applauses, and hisses, in the midst of which Verplanck appeared on the platform, saying: "The reasons are not satisfactory; Mr. Maxwell must be supported," and then he moved "that the thanks of the audience be given to Mr. Maxwell for his spirited defence of an injured man." It was some time before the tumult could be allayed, the audience taking part with the disturbers; but the result was that Maxwell, Verplanck, and several others were prosecuted for riot in the Mayor's Court. De Witt Clinton was then Mayor of New York. In his charge to the jury he inveighed with great severity against the accused, particularly Verplanck, of whose conduct he spoke as a piece of matchless impudence, and declared the disturbance to be one of the grossest and most shameless outrages he had ever known. They were found guilty; Maxwell, Verplanck, and Stevenson were fined two hundred dollars each, and several others less. An appeal was entered by the accused, but afterward withdrawn. I have heard one of our judges express a doubt whether this disturbance could properly be considered as a riot, but they did not choose to avail themselves of the doubt if there was any, and submitted.

There is this extenuation of the rashness of these young men: that Mr. Mason, to whom was attributed the attempt to suppress certain passages in Stevenson's oration, was himself in the habit of giving free expression to his political sentiments in the pulpit. He belonged to the Federal party, Stevenson to the party then called Republican.

I have said the accused submitted; but the phrase is scarcely accurate. Verplanck took his own way of obtaining redress, and annoyed Clinton with satirical attacks for several years afterward. Some of these appeared in a newspaper called the "Corrector"; but those which attracted the most attention were the pamphlets styled "Letters of Abimelech Coody, Ladies' Shoemaker," the first of



which was published in 1811, addressed to Dr. Samuel Latham Mitchell.

The war went on until Clinton or some friend was provoked to answer in a pamphlet entitled "An Account of Abimelech Coody and other celebrated Worthies of New York, in a Letter from a Traveller." The writer satirizes not only Verplanck, but James K. Paulding and Washington Irving, of whose "History of New York" he speaks disparagingly. In what he says of Verplanck, he allows himself to refer to his figure and features as subjects of ridicule. This war, I think, was closed by the publication of "The Bucktail Bards," as the little volume is called, which contains "The State Triumvirate, a Political Tale," and the "Epistles of Brevet Major Pindar Puff." These I have heard spoken of as the joint productions of Verplanck and Rudolph Bunner, a scholar and a man of wit. "The State Triumvirate" is in octosyllabic verse, and in the manner of Swift, but the allusions are obscure, and it is a task to read it. The notes, in which the hand of Verplanck is very apparent, are intelligible enough, and are clever, caustic, and learned. The "Epistles," which are in heroic verse, have striking passages, and the notes are of a like incisive character. De Witt Clinton, then Governor of the State, valued himself on his devotion to science and literature, but he was sometimes obliged, in his messages and public discourses, to refer to compends which are in everybody's hands, and his antagonists made this the subject of unsparing ridicule.

In the family of Josiah Ogden Hoffman lived Mary Eliza Fenno, the sister of his wife, and daughter of John Ward Fenno, originally of Boston, and afterward proprietor of a newspaper published in Philadelphia, entitled the "Gazette of the United States." Between this young lady and Verplanck there grew up an attachment, and in 1811 they were married. I have seen an exquisite miniature of her by Malbone, taken in her early girlhood, when about fifteen years old—beautiful as an angel, with light chestnut hair and a soft blue eye, in the look of which is a touch of sadness, as if caused by some dim



presentiment of her early death. I remember hearing Miss Sedgwick say that she should always think the better of Verplanck for having been the husband of Eliza Fenno. Several of her letters, written to him before their marriage, are preserved, which, amid the sprightliness natural to her age, show a more than usual thoughtfulness. She rallies him on being adopted by the mob, and making harangues at ward meetings. She playfully chides him for wandering from the apostolic church to hear popular preachers and clerks that sing well; which she regards as crimes against the memory of his ancestors—an allusion to that part of the family pedigree which traced his descent in some way from the royal line of the Stuarts. She rallies him on his passion for old books, remarking that some interesting works had just appeared which must be kept from him till he reaches the age of threescore, when they will be fit for his perusal. She writes to him from Boston, that he is accounted there an amazingly plain-spoken man—he had called the Boston people heretics. She writes to him in Stratford, imagining him in Bishop Berkeley's arm-chair, surrounded by family pictures and huge folios. These letters were carefully preserved by her husband till his death, along with various memorials of her whom he had lost; locks of her sunny brown hair, the diamond ring which he had placed on her finger when they were engaged to each other, wrapped in tresses of the same bright hair, and miniatures of her, which the family never heard of till he died—all variously disposed among the papers in the drawers of his desk, so that, whenever he opened it, he might be reminded of her, and her memory might become a part of his daily life. With these were preserved some letters of his own, written to her about the same time, and of a sportive character. In one of these he laments the passing away of the good old customs, and simple ways of living in the country, supplanted by the usages of town life. Everybody was then reading "*Cœlebs in Search of a Wife*," and Verplanck, who had just been looking over some of the writings of Wilberforce, sees in it resemblances to

his style, which led him to set down Wilberforce as the author.

He lived with his young wife five years, and she bore him two sons, one of whom died at the age of thirty, unmarried, and the other has become the father of a numerous family. Her health failing, he took her to Europe, in the hope that it might be restored by a change of air and scene, but after languishing a while she died at Paris, in the year 1817. She sleeps in the cemetery of Père la Chaise, among monuments inscribed with words strange to her childhood, while he, after surviving her for sixty-three years, yet never forgetting her, is laid in the ancestral burying-ground at Fishkill, and the Atlantic Ocean rolls between their graves.

He remained in Europe a little while after this event, and, having looked at what the continent had to show him, went over to England. In his letters to his friends at home he spoke pathetically of the loss of her who was the blessing of his life, of the delight with which, had she lived, she would have looked at so many things in the Old World now attracting his attention, and of the misfortune of his children to be deprived of her care and guidance. In one of his letters he speaks enthusiastically of the painter Allston, with whose genius he was deeply impressed as he looked on the grand picture of Daniel interpreting the Dream of Belshazzar, then begun but never to be finished. In the same letter he relates this anecdote: "You may expect another explosion of mad poetry from Lord Byron. Lord Holland, who returned from Geneva a few days ago, told Mr. Gallatin that he was the bearer of a considerable cargo of verses from his lordship to Murray the publisher, the subject not known. That you may have a higher relish for the new poem, I give you a little anecdote which is told in London. Some time ago Lord Byron's books were sold at auction, where a gentleman purchased a splendid edition of Shakespeare. When it was sent home a volume was missing. After several fruitless inquiries of the auctioneer, the purchaser went to Byron. 'What play was in the volume?'

asked he. 'I think "Othello."' 'Ah! I remember. I was reading that when Lady Byron did something to vex me. I threw the book at her head and she carried it out of the room. Inquire of some of her people and you will get your book.' "

While abroad, Verplanck fell in with Dr. Mason, who had refused Stevenson his degree. The two travellers took kindly to each other, and the unpleasant affair of the college disturbance was forgotten.

In 1818, after his return from Europe, he delivered before this Society the noble anniversary discourse in which he commemorates the virtues and labors of some of those illustrious men who, to use his words, "have most largely contributed to raise or support our national institutions, and to form or elevate our national character." Las Casas, Roger Williams, William Penn, General Oglethorpe, Professor Luzac, and Berkeley are among the worthies whom he celebrates. It has always seemed to me that this is one of the happiest examples in our language of the class of compositions to which it belongs, both as regards the general scope and the execution, and it is read with as much interest now as when it was first written.

Mr. Verplanck was elected in 1820 a member of the New York House of Assembly, but I do not learn that he particularly distinguished himself while in that body. In the year following he was appointed, in the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church, Professor of the Evidences of Revealed Religion and Moral Science in its Relations to Theology. For four years he performed the duties of this professorship, with what ability is shown by his "Treatise on the Evidences of Christianity," the fruit of his studies during this interval. It is principally a clear and impressive view of that class of proofs of the Christian religion which have a direct relation to the intellectual and moral wants of mankind. For he was a devout believer in the Christian gospel, and cherished religious convictions for the sake of their influence on

the character and the life. This work was published in 1824, about the time that he resigned his professorship.

It was in 1825 that he published his essay on the "Doctrine of Contracts," in which he maintained that the transaction between the buyer and seller of a commodity should be one of perfect frankness and an entire absence of concealment; that the seller should be held to disclose everything within his knowledge which would affect the price of what he offered for sale, and that the maxim which is compressed into the two Latin words, *caveat emptor*—the maxim that the buyer takes the risk of a bad bargain—is not only a selfish but a knavish and immoral rule of conduct, and should not be recognized by the tribunals. The question is ably argued on the grounds of an elevated morality; but I have heard jurists object to the doctrine of this essay, that if it were to prevail it would greatly multiply the number of lawsuits.

In 1825 Mr. Verplanck was elected one of the three Representatives in Congress to which this city was then entitled. He immediately distinguished himself as a working member. This appellation is given in Congress to members who labor faithfully in committees, consider petitions and report upon them, investigate claims, inquire into matters referred to their judgment, frame bills, and present them through their chairman. Besides these, there are the talking members, who take part in every debate, often without knowing anything of the question save what they learn while the debate is proceeding, and the idle members, who do nothing but vote—generally, I believe, without knowing anything of the question whatever; but to neither of these classes did Verplanck belong. He was a diligent, useful, and valued member of the Committee of Ways and Means, and at an important period of our political history was its chairman.

Then arose the great controversy concerning the right of a State to refuse obedience at pleasure to any law of Congress—a right contended for under the name of nullification by some of the most eminent men of the South, whose ability, po-



litical influence, and power of putting a plausible face on their heresy gave their cause at first an appearance of great strength, and seemed to threaten the very existence of the Union. With their denial of the binding force of any law of Congress which a State might think proper to set aside, these men combined another argument. They denied the power of Congress under the Constitution to levy duties on important merchandise for the purpose of favoring the home manufacturer, and maintained that it could only lay duties for the sake of raising a revenue. Mr. Verplanck favored neither this view nor their theory of nullification. He held that the power to lay duties being given to Congress without reservation by the Constitution, the end or motive of laying them was left to the discretion of the Legislature. He showed also that the power to regulate commerce, given to that body in the Constitution, was from an early period in our history held to imply a right, by laying duties, to favor particular traffics, products, or fabrics.

This view of the subject was presented with great skill and force in a pamphlet entitled "A Letter to Colonel William Drayton, of South Carolina," published in 1831. Mr. Verplanck was through life a friend to the freedom of exchange, but he would not use in its favor any argument which did not seem to him just. His pamphlet was so ably reasoned that William Leggett said to him, in my presence: "Mr. Verplanck, you have convinced me; I was till now of a different opinion from yours, but you have settled the question against me. I now see that, whatever may be the injustice of protective duties, Congress has the constitutional right to impose them."

It was while this controversy was going on that President Jackson issued his proclamation warning those who resisted the revenue laws that their resistance was regarded as rebellion, and would be quelled at the bayonet's point. Mr. Calhoun and his friends were not prepared for this; indeed, I do not think that in any of his plans for the separate action of the

slave States he contemplated a resort to arms on either side. They looked about them to find some plausible pretext for submission, and this the country was not unwilling to give. It was generally admitted that the duties on imported goods ought to be reduced, and Mr. McLane, Secretary of the Treasury, and Mr. Verplanck, Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, each drew up a plan for lessening the burdens of the tariff. Mr. McLane had just returned from a successful mission to Great Britain, and had the advantage of considerable personal popularity. He was a moderate protectionist, and with great pains drew up a scheme of duties which kept the protection of home manufactures in view. Some branches of industry, he thought, were so far advanced that they would bear a small reduction of the duty; others a still larger; others were yet so weak that they could not prosper unless the whole existing duty was retained. The scheme was laid before Congress, but met with little attention from any quarter; the Southern politicians regarded it with scorn, as made up of mere cheese-parings. Mr. Verplanck's plan of a tariff was more liberal. He was not a protectionist, and his scheme contemplated a large reduction of duties—as large as it was thought could possibly be adopted by Congress—yet so framed as to cause as little inconvenience as might be to the manufacturers. It was thought that Mr. Calhoun and his friends would readily accept it, as affording them a not ignoble retreat from their dangerous position.

While these projects were before Congress, Mr. Littell, a gentleman of the free-trade school, and now editor of the "*Living Age*," drew up a scheme of revenue reform more thorough than either of the others. It proposed to reduce the duties annually until, at the end of ten years, the principle of protection, which was what the Southern politicians complained of, should disappear from the tariff, and a system of duties take its place which should in no case exceed the rate of twenty per cent on the value of the commodity imported. The draught to this scheme was shown to Mr. Clay; he saw at

once that it would satisfy the Southern politicians ; he adopted it, brought it before Congress, urged its enactment in several earnest speeches, and, by the help of his great influence over his party, it was rapidly carried through both Houses, under the name of the Compromise Tariff, to the astonishment of the friends of free-trade, the mill-owners, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Committee of Ways and Means, and, I think, the country at large. I thought it hard measure for Mr. Verplanck that the credit of this reform should be taken out of his hands by one who had always been the great advocate of protective duties ; but this was one of the fortunate strokes of policy which Mr. Clay, when in the vigor of his faculties, had the skill to make. He afterward defended the measure as inflicting no injury upon the manufacturers, and it never appeared to lessen the good-will which his party bore him.

About this time I was witness to a circumstance which showed the sagacity of Mr. Verplanck in estimating the consequences of political measures. Mr. Van Buren had been sent by President Jackson as our Minister to the British Court while Congress was not in session, and the nomination yet awaited confirmation by the Senate. It led to a long and spirited debate, in which Mr. Marcy uttered the memorable maxim : "To the victor belong the spoils of the enemy," which was so often quoted against him. I was in Washington, dining with Mr. Verplanck, when the vote on this nomination was taken. As we were at the table, two of the Senators—Dickinson, of New Jersey, and Tazewell, of Virginia—entered. Verplanck, turning to them, asked, eagerly : "How has it gone?" Dickinson, extending his left hand, with the fingers closed, swept the other hand over it, striking the fingers open, to signify that the nomination was rejected. "There," said Verplanck, "that makes Van Buren President of the United States." Verplanck was by no means a partisan of Van Buren, but he saw what the effect of that vote would be, and his prediction was in due time verified.

While in Congress, Mr. Verplanck procured the enactment

of a law for the further security of literary property. To use his own words, it "gave additional security to the property of authors and artists in their works, and more than doubled the term of legal protection to them, besides simplifying the law in various respects." It was passed in 1831, though Mr. Verplanck had begun to urge the measure three years before, when he brought in a bill for the purpose, but party strife was then at its height, and little else than the approaching elections were thought of by the members of Congress. When party heat had cooled a little, he gained their attention, and his bill became a law. If we had now in Congress a member so much interested for the rights of authors and artists, and at the same time so learned, so honored, and persevering, we might hope that the inhospitable usage which makes the property of the American author in Great Britain and of the British author in the United States the lawful prize of whomsoever chooses to appropriate it to himself, would be abolished.

A dinner was given to Verplanck on his return from Washington, in the name of several literary gentlemen of New York; but the expense was, in fact, defrayed by a generous and liberal-minded bookseller, Elam Bliss, who held authors in high veneration, and only needed a more discriminating perception of literary merit to make him, in their eyes at least, a perfect bookseller. On this occasion Mr. Verplanck spoke well and modestly of the part he had taken in procuring the passage of the new law; mentioned with especial honor the "first and ablest champion" who had then "appeared in this cause," Mr. Willard Phillips, who had discussed the question in the "North American Review"; referred to the opinions of various eminent publicists, and pointed out that our own Constitution had recognized the right of literary property while it left to Congress the duty of securing it. He closed with an animated view of what American literature ought to be and might be under circumstances favorable to its wholesome and vigorous growth. We listened with delight, and were proud of our Representative.



During Mr. Verplanck's fourth and last term in Congress he became separated from his associates of the Democratic party by a difference in regard to the Bank of the United States. General Jackson had laid rough hands on this institution and removed to the State banks the public money which had till then been intrusted to its keeping. Many of our best men had then a high opinion of the utility of the Bank, and thought much better of its management than, as afterward appeared, it deserved. The Whig party declared itself in favor of the Bank. Mr. Calhoun and the Southern politicians of his immediate school joined them on this question, and Mr. Verplanck, who regarded the bank with a friendly eye, found himself on the same side which proved to be the minority. The time arrived for another election of members of Congress from this city. The Democratic party desired to re-elect Mr. Verplanck, if some assurance could be obtained from him that he would not oppose the policy of the Administration in regard to the Bank. That party understood very well his merits and his usefulness, and made a strong effort to retain him, but he would give no assurance, even to pursue a neutral course, on the bank question, and, accordingly, his name was reluctantly dropped from their list of nominations. A long separation ensued between him and those who up to that time had been his political associates.

In 1834 the Whig party, looking for a strong candidate for the mayoralty of the city, offered the nomination to Verplanck, who accepted it. On the other side, the Democrats brought forward Cornelius W. Lawrence, a man of popular manners and unquestioned integrity. Those were happy days when, in voting for a mayor, the citizen could be certain that he would not vote amiss, and that, whoever succeeded in the election, the city was sure of an honest man for its chief officer. One would have thought that this consideration might make the election a quiet one, but it was not so; the struggle was for party supremacy, and it was violent on both sides. At that time the polls were kept open for three days, and each

day the excitement increased: disorders took place, some heads were broken, and at last it appeared that Lawrence was elected Mayor by a majority of about two hundred votes.

While in Congress, Verplanck had leisure, during the interval between one session and another, for literary occupations. He wrote about one third of an annual collection of miscellanies entitled the "*Talisman*," which was published by Dr. Bliss in the year 1827 and the two following years. To these volumes he contributed the "*Peregrinations of Petrus Mudd*," a humorous and lively sketch, founded on the travels of a New Yorker of the genuine old stock, who, when he returned from wandering over all Europe and part of Asia, set himself down to study geography in order to know where he had been. Of the graver articles he wrote "*De Gourgès*," a chapter from the history of the Huguenot colonists of this country, "*Gelyna, a Tale of Albany and Ticonderoga*," and several others. In conjunction with Robert C. Sands, a writer of a peculiar vein of quaint humor, he contributed two papers to the collection, entitled "*Scenes in Washington*," of a humorous and satirical character. He disliked the manual labor of writing, and was fond of dictating while another held the pen. I was the third contributor to the "*Talisman*," and sometimes acted as his amanuensis. In estimating Verplanck's literary character, these compositions, some of which are marked by great beauty of style and others by a rich humor, should not be overlooked. The first volume of the "*Talisman*" was put in type by a young Englishman named Cox, who, while working at his desk as a printer, composed a clever review of the work, which appeared in the "*New York Mirror*," and of which Verplanck often spoke with praise.

In 1833 Verplanck collected his public discourses into a volume. Among these is one delivered in August of that year, at Columbia College, in which he holds up to imitation the illustrious examples of great men educated at that institution. In one of those passages of stately eloquence which he knew so well how to frame, he speaks of the worth of his old

adversary, De Witt Clinton, the first graduate of the College after the peace of 1783, and pays due "honor to that lofty ambition which taught him to look to designs of grand utility, and to their successful execution as his arts of gaining or redeeming the confidence of a generous and public-spirited people." In the same discourse he pronounced the eulogy of Dr. Mason, who had died a few days before. In the same year, Verplanck, at Geneva College, delivered an address on the "Right Moral Influence and Use of Liberal Studies," and the next year, at Amherst College, another on the converse of that subject, namely, the "Influence of Moral Causes upon Opinion, Science, and Literature." In 1836 he gave a discourse on "The Advantages and Dangers of the American Scholar." Of these addresses, let me say that I know of no compositions of their class which I read with more pleasure or more instruction. Enlarged views, elevated sentiments, a hopeful and courageous spirit, a wide knowledge of men and men's recorded experience, and a manly dignity of style, mark them all as productions of no common mind.

After separating from the Democratic party, Mr. Verplanck was elected by the Whigs, in 1837, to the Senate of the State of New York, while that body was yet a Court for the Correction of Errors—a tribunal of the last resort—and in that capacity decided questions of law of the highest magnitude and importance. Nothing in his life was more remarkable than the new character in which he now appeared. The practiced statesman, the elegant scholar, and the writer of graceful sketches, the satirist, the critic, the theologian, started up a profound jurist. During the four years in which he sat in this court he heard the arguments in nearly every case which came before it, and delivered seventy-one opinions—not simply his written conclusions, but elaborate judgments founded on the closest investigation of the questions submitted, the most careful and exhaustive examination of authorities, and a practical, comprehensive, and familiar acquaintance with legal rules and principles, even those of the most technical nature,

which astonished those who knew that he had never appeared for a client in court, nor sat before in a judicial tribunal. I use in this the language of an able lawyer, Judge Daly, who has made this part of Verplanck's labors a subject of special study.

As examples of his judicial ability, I may instance his examination of the whole structure of our State and Federal Government in the case of Delafield against the State of Illinois, where the question came up whether an individual could sue a State; his survey of the whole law of marine insurance and the principles on which it is founded, in the case of the American Insurance Company against Bryan; his admirable statement of the reasons on which rests the law of prescription, or right established by usage, in the case of Post against Pearsall; his exposition of the extent of the right which in this country the owners of land on the borders of rivers and navigable streams have in the bed of the river, in Kempshall's case—a masterly opinion, in which the whole Court concurred. I might also mention the great case of Alice Lispenard, in which he considered the degree of mental capacity requisite to make a will, a case involving a vast amount of property in this city, decided by his opinion. There is also the case of Smith against Acker, relating to the taint of fraud in mortgages of personal property, in which he carried the Court with him against the Chancellor, and overturned all the previous decisions. Not less important is his elaborate, learned, and exhaustive opinion in the case of Thomson against the People, decided by a single vote and by his opinion—in which he examined the true nature of franchises conferred on individuals in this country by the sovereign power, the right to construct bridges over navigable streams, and the proper operation of the writ of *quo warranto*. These opinions of Verplanck form an important part of the legal literature of our State. If he had made the law his special pursuit, and been placed on the bench of one of our higher tribunals, there is no degree of judicial eminence to which he might not have aspired. The



Standing Committee of the Diocese of New York, of which he was a member, in their resolutions expressive of sorrow for his death, spoke of him as one whose judicial wisdom and familiarity with the principles and practice of the law made his counsels of the highest value.

In 1844, after, I doubt not, some years of previous study, appeared the first number of Verplanck's edition of Shakespeare, issued by Harper & Brothers. The numbers appeared from time to time till 1847, when the work was completed. He made some corrections of the text, but never rashly; he selected the notes of other commentators with care; he added some excellent ones of his own, and wrote admirable critical and historical prefaces to the different plays. This edition has always seemed to me the very one for which the general reader has occasion.

Almost ever since the American Revolution a Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York has existed, on which is laid the duty of visiting and superintending in a general way our institutions of education above the degree of common schools. It consists of twenty-three members, including the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, the Secretary of State, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction; the other nineteen members are appointed by the Legislature. The Board assists at the incorporation of all colleges and academies, looks into their condition, interposes in certain specified cases, receives reports from them and makes annual reports to the Legislature, and confers by diploma such degrees as are granted by any college or university in Europe. Mr. Verplanck was appointed a member of this Board in 1826, in place of Matthew Clarkson, who had been a Regent ever since 1787. In 1855 he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University, and to the time of his death punctually attended the meetings of the Board, shared in its discussions, and bore his part in its various duties. In 1844 the State Library was placed under the superintendence of the Regents. Mr. Verplanck was immediately put on the

Library Committee, where his knowledge of books and editions of books made his services invaluable. There were then about ten thousand volumes in the collection, and many of these consisted of broken sets. Under the care of the Regents—Mr. Verplanck principally, who gave it his particular attention—it has grown into a well-selected, well-arranged library of more than eighty-two thousand volumes. About the same time the State Cabinets of Natural History were put under the care of the Board, and these have equally prospered, every year adding to their extent, until now the Regents publish annually catalogues of the additions made to them from various sources, and occasionally papers communicated by experts in natural history.

Every year, in the month of August, a University Convocation is held at Albany, to which are invited all the leading teachers and professors of our colleges and academies, and carefully prepared papers relating to education are read. At the first of these conventions, in 1863, Mr. D. J. Pratt, now the Assistant Secretary of the Board, had read a paper on "Language as the Chief Educator and the noblest Liberal Art," in which he dwelt upon the importance of studying the ancient classic authors in their original tongues. Mr. Verplanck remarked that in what he had to say he would content himself with relating an anecdote respecting the first Napoleon, which he had from a private source, and which had never been in print. The Emperor, wishing to keep himself advised of what was passing in the University of France, yet without attracting public attention, was wont on certain occasions to send to the University a trustworthy and intelligent person from his household, who was to bring back a report. This man at one time reported that the question of paying more attention to the mathematical sciences had been agitated. On this Napoleon exclaimed with emphasis: "Go to the Polytechnic for mathematics, but classics, classics, classics for the University!" At another time Verplanck, still occupied with his favorite studies, gave the convention an address on the pronunciation of

the Latin language, in which he came to the conclusion that, of all the branches of the Latin race, the Portuguese, in their pronunciation of Latin, make the nearest approach to that of the ancient Romans. He was desired by the members of the Board to write out the address for publication, but this was never done. Verplanck, as I have already remarked, was an unwilling scribe, and did not like to handle the pen.

The Annual Reports of the Regents, which are voluminous documents, give much the same view of the arrangements for public education in the State as is obtained of a country by looking down upon it from an observatory. Every college, every academy, every school, not merely a private enterprise, and above the degree of common schools, makes its yearly report to the Regents, and these are embodied in the general report which they make to the Legislature, so that the whole great system, with all its appendages, its libraries, its revenues, its expenditures, the number of its teachers and its pupils, and the opportunities of instruction which it gives, lies before the eye of the reader. It now comprehends twenty Colleges of Literature and Science, three Law Departments, two Medical Colleges, two hundred or more Academies, or schools of that class, besides the Normal School at Albany.

In his discourse delivered before this Society in 1818, Mr. Verplanck had apostrophized his native country as the Land of Refuge. He could not then have foreseen how well in aftertimes it would deserve this name, nor what labors and responsibilities the care of that mighty throng who resort to our shores for work and bread would cast upon him. Shortly before the year 1847 the number of emigrants from Europe arriving in our country had rapidly and surprisingly increased. The famine in Ireland had caused the people of that island to migrate to ours in swarms like those which the populous North poured from her frozen loins to overwhelm the Roman Empire. In the ten years from 1845 to 1854, inclusive, more than a million and a half of Irish emigrants left the United Kingdom. The emigration from Germany had also prodigi-

ously increased, and promised to become still larger. All these were exposed, and the Germans in a particular manner, on account of their ignorance of our language, to the extortions of a knavish class called runners, and of the keepers of boarding-houses, who often defrauded them of all that they possessed, and left them to charity. Most of those who, after these extortions, had the means, made their way into the interior and settled upon farms, but a large number remained to become members of the almshouse, or to starve and sicken in crowded and unwholesome rooms.

These things had become a grievous scandal, and it was clear that something must be done to protect the emigrant from pillage, and the country from the burden of his support. The Act of May, 1847, was therefore passed by the New York Legislature. It named six gentlemen of the very highest character, Gulian C. Verplanck, James Boorman, Jacob Harvey, Robert C. Minturn, William F. Havemeyer, and David C. Colden, who were to form a Board of Commissioners of Emigration, charged with the oversight and care of this vast influx of strangers from the Old World. To these were added the Mayors of New York and Brooklyn, and the Presidents of the German Society and the Irish Emigrant Society. Every master of a vessel was, within twenty-four hours after his arrival, to give this Board a list of his passengers, with a report of their origin, age, occupation, condition, health, and other particulars, and either give bonds to save the community from the cost of maintaining them in case they became paupers, or pay for each of them the sum of two dollars and a half. The payment of money has been preferred, and this has put into the hands of the Commissioners a liberal revenue, faithfully applied to the advantage of the emigrants.

Mr. Havemeyer was chosen President of the Board, but resigned the office after a few months, and was succeeded in it by Mr. Verplanck, who held it till the day of his death. Under the management of the Commissioners, the Bureau of Emigration, becoming almost every year more perfectly



adapted to its purpose, has grown to vast dimensions, till it is now like one of the departments of government in a great empire. Whoever passes by Ward's Island, where the tides of the East River and the Sound meet and rush swiftly to and fro through their narrow channels, will have some idea of what the Board has done as he sees the domes and spires of that great cluster of buildings, forming a vast caravansary in which the poorer classes of emigrants are temporarily lodged before they can be sent into the interior or find employment here. Here are barracks for the men, a spacious building for the women and children, a nursery for children of a tender age, Catholic and Protestant chapels, a dispensary, workshops, a lunatic asylum, fever wards, surgical wards, storehouses, residences of the physicians and other persons employed in the care of the place, and out-houses and offices of various kinds. Here, too, rise the stately turrets of the spacious new hospital styled the Verplanck Emigrant Hospital, in honor of the great philanthropist, for such his constant and noiseless labors in this department of charity entitle him to be called.

The Commissioners found that they could not protect the emigrants from imposition without a special landing-place, from which they could wholly exclude the rascal crew who cheated them. It took eight years to obtain this from the New York Legislature, but at last, in 1855, it was granted, and the old fort at the foot of Manhattan Island, called Castle Garden, was leased for this purpose. This is now the Emigrants' Landing, the gate of the New World for those who, pressing westward, throng into it from the Old. Night and day it is open, and through this passage the vast tide of stranger population, which is to mingle with and swell our own, rushes like the current of the Bosphorus from the Black Sea hurrying toward the Propontis and the Hellespont to fill the great basin of the Mediterranean. What will be the condition of mankind when the populations of the two hemispheres, the East and the West, shall have found, as they must, a common level, and when the human race, now struggling

for room in its ancient abodes, shall look in vain for some unoccupied region where a virgin soil is waiting to reward the laborer with bread?

As he enters Castle Garden the emigrant undergoes inspection by a competent physician, and, if he be aged, sick, or in any way disabled, the master of the vessel must give a special bond for his maintenance. He is introduced into the building. Here he finds one department in which he is duly registered, another from which he receives such information as a stranger requires, another from which his luggage is despatched to its destination, another at which attend clerks, skilled in the languages of continental Europe, to write his letters, another at which railway tickets are procured without danger of extortion, another at which fair arrangements are made by boarding-houses, another from which, if sick or destitute, he is sent to Ward's Island, and half a dozen others important as helps to one who has no knowledge of the usages of the country to which he has come. I refer to these arrangements, among a multitude of others, in order to show what administrative talent and what constant attention were necessary to ensure the regular and punctual working of so vast a system. To this duty Mr. Verplanck, aided by able and disinterested associates like himself, gave the labors of a third of a century, uncompensated save by the consciousness of doing good. The composition of this Board has just been changed by the Legislature of the State in such a manner as, unfortunately, to introduce party influences, from which, during all the time of Mr. Verplanck's connection with it, it had been kept wholly free.

Yet Mr. Verplanck had his party attachments, though he never suffered them to lead him out of the way he had marked for himself. He would accompany a party, but never follow it. His party record is singular enough. He was educated a Federalist, but early in life found himself acting against the Federal party. He was with the Whigs in supporting General Harrison for the Presidency, and claimed the credit of

suggesting his nomination. Mr. Clay he would never support on account of his protectionist principles, and when that gentleman was nominated by the Whigs he left them and voted for Mr. Polk, though he was disgusted by the trick which obtained the vote of Pennsylvania for Mr. Polk under the pretence of his being a protectionist. Subsequently he supported General Taylor, the Whig candidate for the Presidency; but the nomination of Mr. Buchanan, in 1857, saw him once more with the Democrats, from whom he did not again separate. When the proposal to make government paper a legal tender for debts was before Congress, he opposed it with great zeal, writing against it in the Democratic journals. I agreed with him that the measure was an act of folly, for which I could find no excuse, but he almost regarded it as a public crime. He vehemently disapproved, also, of the arbitrary arrests made by our Government during the war, some of which, without question, were exceedingly ill-advised. His zeal on these points, I think, made him blind to the great issues involved in our late civil war, and led his usually clear and liberal judgment astray.

I have not yet mentioned various capacities in which he served the public without any motive but to minister to the public welfare. He was from a very early period a trustee of the Society Library, in which he took great interest, delighting to make additions to its stock of books, and passing much time in its alcoves and its reading-rooms. He was one of the wardens of Trinity Church, that mistress of mighty revenues. He was for some years one of the governors of the New York Hospital, and I remember when he made periodical visits to the Insane Asylum at Bloomingdale, as one invested with authority there. During the existence of the Public School Society he was one of its trustees—from 1834 to 1841—and rendered essential service to the cause of public education.

His useful life closed on the eighteenth of March last. For some months before this date his strength had declined;

and when I met him from time to time it seemed to me that his features had become sharper and his frame more attenuated, yet I perceived no diminution of mental vigor. He took the same interest in the events and questions of the day that he had done years before, his apprehension seemed as quick, and all the powers of his mind as active.

On the Wednesday before his death he attended one of those weekly meetings which he took care never to miss, that of the Commissioners of Emigration. But in one of his walks on a rainy day he had taken a cold which resulted in a congestion of the lungs. On Thursday evening he lay upon a sofa, conversing from time to time, after his usual manner, until near midnight. On Friday morning, when his body servant entered the room and looked at him, he perceived a change and called his grandson, who, with a granddaughter, had constantly attended him during the past winter. The grandson immediately went for his physician, Dr. Carnochan, who, however, was not to be found, and whose assistant, a young man, came in his stead. Mr. Verplanck, in a way which was characteristic of him, studied the young man's face for a moment and then asked: "From what college were you graduated?" The reply was, "Paris;" on which Mr. Verplanck turned away as if it did not much please him, and in a moment afterward expired. He was spared the previous suffering which so many are called to endure. His son had visited him from time to time, and was with him the day before his death; yet this event was unexpected to all the family. His father, in his old age, had as suddenly passed away, having fallen dead by the wayside.

The private life of our friend was as beautiful as his public life was useful and beneficent. He took great interest in the education of his grandchildren, inquired into their studies, talked with them of the books they read, and sought with great success to make them fond of all good learning, directing their attention to all that was noble in literature and in art. His mind was a storehouse of facts in history and biog-



raphy, on which he drew for their entertainment, and upon occasion diversified the graver narratives with fairy tales and stories of wonder from the "Arabian Nights." He made learning pleasant to them by taking them on Saturdays to places of amusement, from which he contrived that they should return not only amused but instructed. In short, it seemed as if, in his solicitude for the education of his descendants, he sought to repay the cares bestowed upon his early youth by his grandfather of Stratford, of whom he said, in his discourse delivered at Amherst College, that his best education was bestowed by the more than paternal care of one of the wisest and most excellent sons of New England. Long after he was an old man he would make pleasant summer journeys with these young people, and look to their comfort and safety with the tenderest solicitude.

Christmas was merry Christmas at the old family mansion in Fishkill. He caused the day to be kept with many of the ancient usages, to the great satisfaction of the younger members of the household. He was fond of observing particular days and seasons, and marking them by some pleasant custom of historical significance—for with all the ancient customs and rites and pastimes pertaining to them he was as familiar as if they were matters of to-day. It distressed him even to tears when, last Christmas, he found that his health did not allow him to make the journey to Fishkill as usual. He made much of the birthdays of his grandchildren, and taught them to observe that of Shakespeare by adorning the dwelling with flowers, mentioned in those aërial verses of the "Winter's Tale"—

—"daffodils,

That come before the swallow dares, and take  
The winds of March with beauty ; violets dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes  
Or Cytherea's breath ; pale primroses,  
That die unmarried," etc , etc.

For many years he had divided his time pretty equally between Fishkill and New York, visiting the homestead in the latter part of the week and returning in time to attend the weekly meetings of the Commissioners of Emigration. While in the country he was a great deal in the open air, superintending the patrimonial estate, which he managed with ability as a man of business, giving a careful attention even to the minutest details. But he was most agreeably employed in his large and well-stored library. Here were different editions of the Greek and Latin classics, some of them rare and enriched with sumptuous illustrations—thirty different ones of Horace, and nearly as many of Virgil. With the Greek tragedians he was as familiar as with our own Shakespeare. In this library he wrote for the "*Crayon*" his entertaining paper on "*Garrick and his Portrait*," and his charming little volume entitled "*Twelfth Night at the Century Club*." Here also he wrote several papers respecting the true interpretation of certain passages in Virgil, which were published in the "*Evening Post*." It is to be regretted that he did not collect and publish his literary papers, which would form a very agreeable miscellany. He seemed, however, almost indifferent to literary fame, and when he had once sent forth into the world an essay or a treatise, left it to its fate as an affair which was now off his hands.

On Sunday morning he was always at the old church in the village of Fishkill, one of the most attentive and devout worshippers there. It is an ancient building of homely architecture, looking now just as it did a century ago, with a big old pulpit and sounding-board in the midst of the church, which the people would have been glad to remove, but refrained, because Mr. Verplanck, whom they so venerated, preferred that it should remain.

The patrimonial mansion at Fishkill had historical associations which must have added to the interest with which our friend regarded it. Mr. Tuckerman relates, in the "*North American Review*," though without naming the place or the

persons, a story in which they were brought out in a singular manner. He was there fifteen or twenty years since, a guest at Verplanck's table. He describes the June sunshine, which played through the shifting branches of tall elms on the smooth oaken floor of the old dining-room, the plate of antique pattern on the sideboard, and the portraits of revolutionary heroes on the walls. As they sat down to dinner, an old lady, bowed with years and with a restless yet serene look, entered and took a seat beside Mr. Verplanck. A servant adjusted a napkin under her chin and the dinner proceeded. A steamer was passing up the river, and a band on board struck up a martial air. The old lady trembled, clasped her hands, and, raising her eyes, exclaimed: "Ah! all intercession is vain. André must die." Mr. Verplanck made a sign to the company to listen, and, calling the lady Aunt, addressed her with some kind inquiry, on which she went on to speak of the events and personages of the Revolution as matters of the present day. She repeated rapidly the names of the English officers whom she had known, "described her lofty head-dress of ostrich feathers, which caught fire at the theatre, and repeated the verses of her admirer who was so fortunate as to extinguish it." She dwelt upon the majestic bearing of Washington, the elegance of the French, the dogmatism of the British officers; the by-words, the names of gallants, belles, and heroes. The incidents, the questions, the etiquette of those times seemed to live again in her tremulous accents, which gradually became feeble, until she fell asleep! "It was," continued the narrator, "like a voice from the grave." This old lady was a Miss Walton, a sister of Judge Verplanck's second wife.

When he found time for the studies by which his mind was kept so full of useful and curious knowledge I cannot well conceive. He loved to protract an interesting conversation into the small hours of the night, and he was by no means, as it is said most long-lived men are, an early riser. An anecdote related by a gentleman of the New York bar will serve

to illustrate, in some degree, his desultory habits during that part of his time which was passed in New York. This gentleman gave a dinner at Delmonico's, then in William Street, to a professional brother from another city, who was in town only for the day. Mr. Verplanck, Judge William Kent, and one or two other clever lawyers were of the party. I will allow him to tell the story in his own words. "We, of course," he says, "had a delightful evening, for our stranger guest was a diamond, Kent was never more charming and witty, Mr. — never more stately and brilliant, and Verplanck was in his most genial mood, full of his peculiarly interesting, graceful, and instructive conversation. The spirit of the hour was unrestrained and cordial. We had a good time, and it was not early when the dispersion began. Verplanck and Kent remained with us after the others withdrew, and, as midnight approached, Kent also departed. After a while Verplanck and I went forth and sauntered along in the darkness through the deserted streets, among the tenantless and gloomy houses, till we reached the point where his path would diverge for Broadway and up-town, and mine for Fulton Ferry and Brooklyn Heights. Instead of leaving me, the good philosopher volunteered to keep on with me to the river, and, when we reached the river, proposed to remain with me until the boat arrived, and then proposed to cross the river with me. We were, I think, the only passengers, and his conversation continued to flow as fresh and interesting as at the dinner-table until we reached the Brooklyn shore. He declined to pass the rest of the night at my house, and, while I waited with him till the boat should leave the wharf to take him back, the night editor of the 'Courier and Enquirer,' a clever and accomplished gentleman, came on board on the way to his nocturnal labors. I introduced them to each other; they were at once in good accord; I saw them off and went homeward. A day or two after, I learned that, when they reached the New York shore, Verplanck volunteered to stroll down to the 'Courier' office with the editor, accepted his invi-



tation to walk in, ascending with him to his room in the attic, and, to the editor's great delight and edification, remained with him, conversing, reading, and ruminating until broad daylight. There was a charm in Mr. Verplanck's conversation that was distinctive and peculiar. It was 'green pastures and still waters.'"

Our friend had, it is true, a memory which faithfully retained the acquisitions made in early life, but, in some way or other, was continually enlarging them. I think I have never known one whose thoughts were so much with the past, whose memory was so familiar with the words and actions of those who inhabited the earth before us, and who so loved and revered the worthy examples they have given us, yet who so much interested himself in the present and was so hopeful of the future. There was no tendency of this shifting and changeful age which he did not observe, no new discovery made, no new theory started, no untrodden path of speculation opened to human thought, which did not immediately engage his attention, and of which he had not something instructive to say. He was as familiar with the literature of the day as are the crowd of common readers who know no other; yet he suffered not the brilliant novelties of the hour to wean his admiration from the authors whose reputation has stood the test of time. He was generous, however, to rising merit, and took pleasure in commending it to the attention of others.

His learning was not secular merely. His library was well stocked with works on theology; he was familiar with the questions discussed in them; the New Testament, in the original, was a part of his daily reading; he had examined the dark or doubtful passages of Scripture, and they who were much in his society needed no more satisfactory commentator. Not long since he sent to the Society Library for a theological work rather out of date. "It is the first time that work was ever called for," said the librarian, smiling, as he took it from the shelf and aired the leaves a little.

His kindness to his fellow-men was shown more in deeds than in words—for of words of compliment he was particularly sparing; and he loved to do good by stealth. A letter from his pastor, the Rev. Dr. Shelton, says: "He was very kind and affectionate when he thought he discovered merit in anybody, however humble; and though he dropped never so much as a hint to the individual himself, he was pretty sure to speak a good word for him in quarters where it would have an influence. A great many never knew whom they had to thank for this. Here he recommended some one for a place, there he picked up a book or a set of books for some distant library. In this way he went about doing good, and, not given to impulse, was systematically benevolent." A letter from another hand speaks of the clergyman whom he had put in the way of getting a parish, the youths for whom he had procured employment—favours quietly conferred, when perhaps the person benefited had forgotten the application or given up the pursuit. He preserved carefully all that related to those persons in whom he took a kindly interest. "Never," says Dr. Shelton, "did a juvenile letter come to him that he did not carefully put away. Whole packages of them are found among his papers; if they had been State documents, they could not have been more important in his eyes."

I have spoken of the hopefulness of his temper. This was doubtless in a great degree constitutional, for he is said to have been an utter stranger to physical fear, preserving his calmness on occasions when others would be in a fever of alarm. He loved our free institutions, he had a serene and steady confidence in their duration, and his published writings are for the most part eloquent pleas for freedom, political equality, and toleration. Even the shameless corruption which has seized on the local government of this city did not dismay or discourage him. He maintained, in a manner which it was not easy to controvert, that the great cities of Europe are quite as grossly misgoverned, and that every overgrown community like ours must find it a difficult task

to rid itself of the official leeches that seek to fatten on its blood.

In looking back upon the public services of our friend, it occurs to me that his life is the more to be held up as an example, inasmuch as, though possessed of an ample fortune, he occupied himself as diligently in gratuitous labors for the general good as other men do in the labors of their profession. In the dispensation of his income he leaned, perhaps, to the side of frugality; but his daily thought and employment were to make his fellow-men happier and better; yet I never knew a man who made less parade of his philanthropy. He rarely, and never save when the occasion required it, spoke of what he had done for others. I never heard, I think no man ever heard, anything like a boast proceed from his lips, nor did he practice any, even the most innocent, expedients to attract attention to his public services. Not that I suppose him insensible to the good-will and good word of his fellow-men. He valued them, doubtless, as every wise man must, but sought them not, except as they might be earned by the unostentatious performance of his duty. If they came, they were welcome; if not, he was content with the testimony of his own conscience and the approval of Him who seeth in secret.

It may be said that in almost every instance the place of those who pass from the stage of life is readily supplied from among the multitude of those who are entering upon it; the well-graced actor who makes his exit is succeeded by another, who soon shows that he is as fully competent to perform the part as his predecessor. But, when I look for one to supply the place of our friend who has departed, I confess I look in vain. I ask, but vainly, where we shall find one with such capacities for earning a great name, such large endowments of mind and acquisitions of study united with such modesty, disinterestedness, and sincerity, and such steady and various labors for the good of our race conjoined with so little desire for the rewards which the world has to bestow on those who render it the highest services. But, though we sorrow for his

departure and see not how his honored place is to be filled, let us congratulate ourselves and the community in which we live that he was spared to us so many years. His day was like one of the finest days in the season of the summer solstice—bright, unclouded, and long.

Farewell—thou who hast already entered upon thy reward! happy in this, that thou wert not called from thy beneficent labors before the night. Thou hast already garnered an ample harvest; the sickle was yet in thy hand; the newly reaped sheaves lay on the field at thy side, when, as the beams of the setting sun trembled on the horizon, the voice of the Master summoned thee to thine appointed rest. May all those who are as nobly endowed as thou, and who as willingly devote themselves to the service of God and mankind, be spared to the world as long as thou hast been.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.













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